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PITHY PAPERS.

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PITHY PAPERS
ON
SINGULAR SUBJECTS.

BY OLD HUMPHREY.

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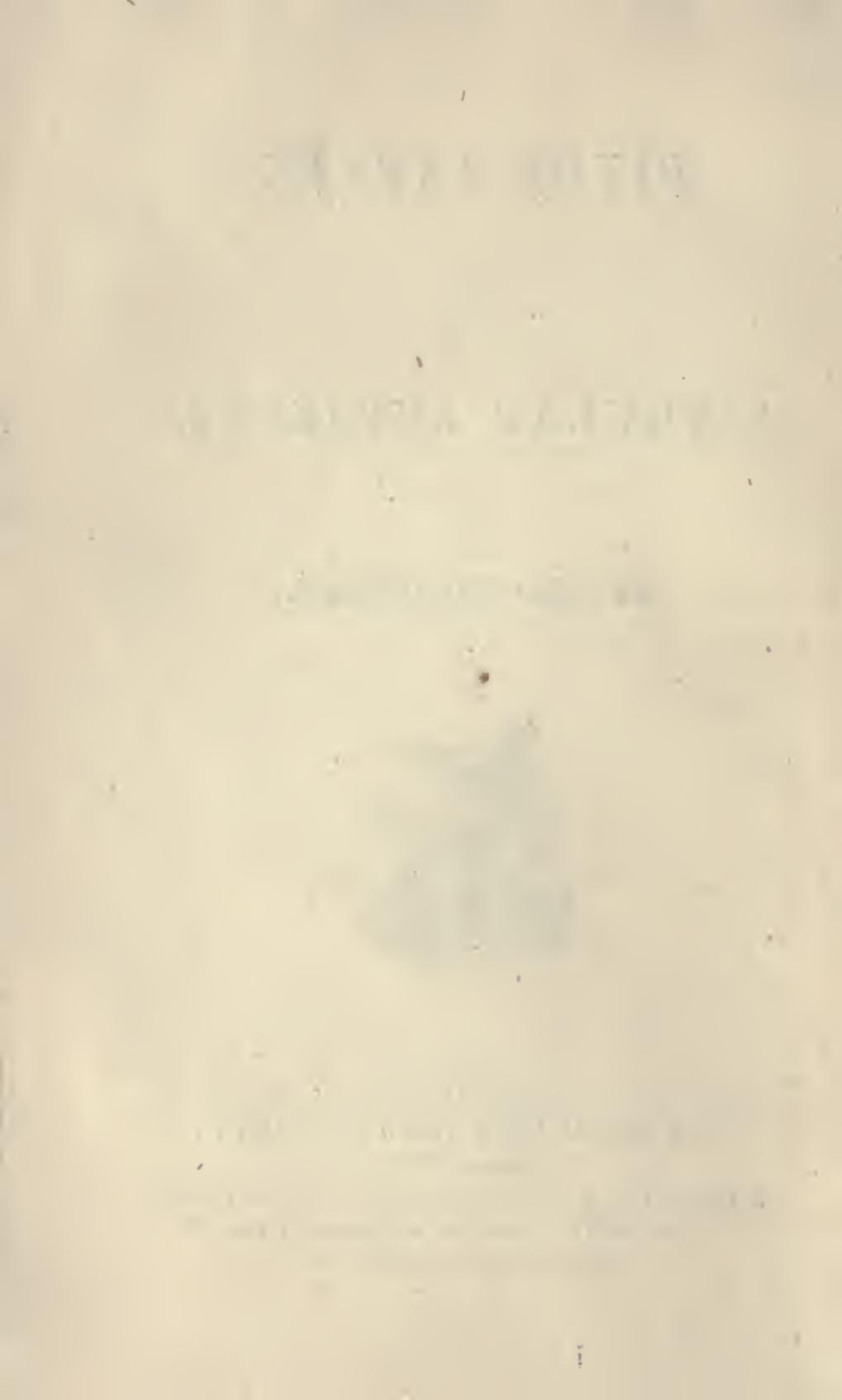


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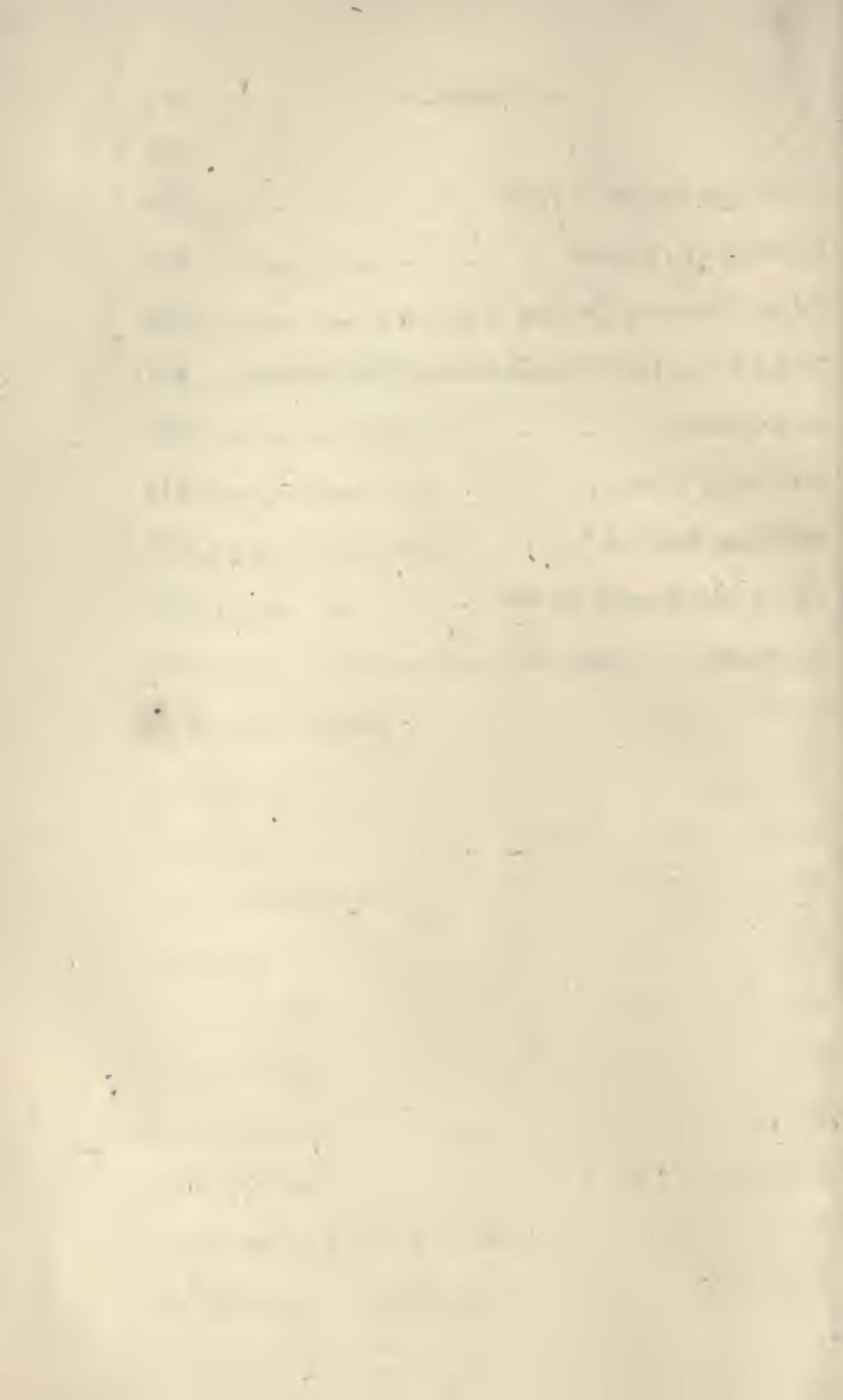
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PITHY PAPERS.

ON

THINGS THAT COST NOTHING.

If you are in the habit of calling to mind your mercies, and of gratefully acknowledging them, you will not take it amiss that I should refresh your memory by adding to the long list a few that may have escaped your recollection. In a word, you will not object to my reminding you, and my own heart also, of some of the many good things we enjoy which cost us nothing.

We pay, and in many cases smartly too, for what we obtain from our fellow-creatures. I dare say that, whether your years have been few or many, you have never yet met with those who have offered to provide you with food, clothing, or habitation, without payment. Such things are quite out of the question, and this I say without

the slightest reflection upon humanity. The comforts and conveniences, the bits and drops, we get from our fellow men ought to be requited. Not that there are no good Samaritans in the world, ever ready to supply oil and wine to the afflicted and destitute ; to convey them, as it were, to some friendly inn ; with a liberal hand to take out “twopence,” or as much as may be required, to give to the host on such occasions, with a generous promise as to any further outlay : but these are individual cases of kindness and peculiarity, and will not apply to mankind at large. As a general principle, the commonest food, the coarsest raiment, and the meanest habitations of humanity, are charged to the uttermost farthing. We can reasonably expect valuable gifts from our heavenly Father alone.

Hurried on by hourly occupations, and taken up with daily cares, we seldom look over the lengthy catalogue of gracious gifts that God in his goodness has bestowed. Were we more frequently to catechise ourselves than we do in these things—were we, as schoolboys repeat their past lessons, to number up our past and present mercies, it would prove a most profitable employment. Let us call to mind a few of our bountifully bestowed blessings now.

And first comes the grateful sense of our exist-

ence, the heart-beating, pulse-throbbing consciousness, that we are breathing créatures, endued with life. We see, hear, smell, taste, and feel, and are thrillingly susceptible to what affords us pleasure. We think, reason, anticipate, remember, and enjoy, and are sensible that this glowing and grateful consciousness of existence is the free gift of our heavenly Father.

And then comes the elevating, the ennobling knowledge that we are not like the beasts that perish ; but that our Creator formed us in his own image, breathed into us a spirit of life, a living soul that shall never die ! What a gift is the gift of immortality !

The pyramids shall crumble, day by day ;
The everlasting hills shall fade away ;
But we shall live, though they in ruins sever,
For ever, and for ever, and for ever !

Our gratuitous enjoyments are not only good, but many of them very delightful and even glorious. We pay nothing for fresh air, and the fresh water of the brook ; nor for the blue vault of heaven, piled up, day by day, with snowy and golden clouds ; yet these things are not only valuable, but inestimable. Ask the afflicted tenant of the sick chamber, or the wretched inmate of a gloomy jail, immured for years in his dreary

prison-house, ask him whether the fresh air is a blessing of little value : why his very heart yearns for a breath of that which we partake of so freely and think of so lightly. Speak to the hectic patient, gasping under the dominion of fever ; or the heat-oppressed traveller in the sultry desert ; speak to him of the fresh water of the brook ; nothing to him would be so delightful in the whole world as a draught of fresh water, to cool his parched throat and furry tongue. When the blind—they who were once blessed with sight—when they roll upwards their sightless balls, you may guess what they would give for a glance at that bright firmament above them, which you and I regard with little emotion.

Sunrise and sunset cost us nothing, all glowing and glorious as they are. Colours that are only to be seen in the heavens, and brightness beyond description, are profusely spread, and we have sight to behold them, pulses to throb, hearts to beat, and minds to contemplate with wonder, thankfulness, and joy. Rising and setting suns are common-place exhibitions to us, when, were there only one such exhibition to be witnessed in a century, multiplied millions, nay almost half the population of the globe, would behold it with rapture.

Have you looked on the silvery moon, gliding

through clouds of bewildering beauty, and gazed on the blue arch of heaven, spangled with glittering worlds, till you have adored their almighty Maker with increased admiration, love, and joy? If so, you must have felt that these things fill the mind with conceptions of immensity, power, goodness, and glory; and I need not tell you that we have them for nothing.

Regard the vegetable world! why, every individual tree, bush, shrub, and plant, is enough of itself, ay, more than enough, to impart a thrill of transport to him who feels that he has, in nature's God, a merciful Father and almighty Friend. Look, then, at the unbounded liberality of our great Creator's vegetable gifts! The spreading oak, the towering elm, the goodly ash, and the romantic fir, challenge our admiration; nor can we gaze without some increase of delight on the fair flower of the chestnut, the straight stem of the poplar, the silvery bark of the birch, or the drooping branches of the weeping willow. These things, and a thousand more such, we have for nothing.

The balmy breeze, the scent of the new-made hay, the odour of the flowering vetches, and the bean-field, are ours without payment. Who ever paid a farthing for the daffodil of the dale; the purple heath-flower of the mountain and the moor;

the warbling of happy birds ; the murmuring of crystal brooks ; the waving of butterflies' wings ; the joyous hum, and, if I can say it without irreverence, the incessant halleluia of the insect world ? Nature is liberal, nay prodigal, of her gifts ; her spacious halls are flung open ; her goodliest exhibitions are free, and her abundant banquets are “without money and without price.”

We give money, and time, and labour, for many things of little value : but we never give either the one or the other for the cheerful sunbeam, and the grateful shower ; the grey of the morning, the twilight of evening ; the broad blaze of noonday ; and the deep silence and darkness of the midnight hour ! The poorest of the poor have these, and they have them for nothing.

There are among the vast, the mighty, and terrible things of the earth, those that yield us a deep delight, and we have them without payment : the mountain towering to the skies, the fearful precipice, the headlong torrent, and the coming storm, are some of them. If you have stood in the war of elements, neither with apathy nor affected sensibility, but with natural and strong emotion, holy awe, high-wrought admiration, adoring reverence, and delightful dread ; you know what I mean by deep delight. There is a deep delight, a dear, though fearful, solemnity in the

darkened clouds ; the flash that illumines heaven, the crash that shakes the solid earth ; the wild sweep of the whirlwind, and the voice of the angry ocean : all these, clothed as they are with mysterious interest, cost us nothing.

The freedom of thought, which no earthly power can control, is worth more than a hundred Mexicos, and yet it costs us not the fraction of a farthing. Well may it be said,

“ My mind to me a kingdom is !”

for there is no other kingdom like it under the sun ; yet this, also, is a gift—the free gift of an almighty Benefactor. It costs us nothing.

The Holy Spirit, the means of grace, and the hope of glory, are freely given, and how much do they comprise ! If you have ever truly enjoyed the day of rest ; if it has been a sabbath to your soul ; if, burdened and bowed down, you have knelt at a throne of grace, and risen from your knees with an enfranchised heart, your soul magnifying the Lord, and your spirit rejoicing in God your Saviour ; if, perplexed and bewildered, you have opened, with trembling hands, the Book of truth, and the Spirit of the Eternal, like a sunbeam, has opened your eyes and enlightened your mind to see the wondrous things of God’s holy law, so that the crooked has been made straight

to you, and the rough places plain ; if you have entered the house of God, panting after eternal life, as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, and a message has been sent you from the Lord by the mouth of his ministering servant, as it were, taking a burden from your back, healing your wounds, binding up your broken bones, satisfying your spiritual hunger, and leading you to the cross of Christ to rejoice—you will truly thank God for these things, and not forget that they cost you nothing.

These, though many, form but a small part of the good gifts we enjoy ; for the things which cost us nothing are numberless. But now comes the crowning question to you and to myself. How, with such mercies, can we help magnifying the Lord ? How, with such abundant gifts, can we do less than live to his glory ?

ON SHIPS MISSING.

A FEW hours ago I was looking over "Lloyd's List" to obtain some nautical information, when my eyes fell on the words "Ships Missing." A chilliness, a sickness of the heart, came over me. "Ships Missing!" What an affecting announcement! how full of melancholy interest and intense anxiety!

The sailing of a ship excites hope, the arrival of a vessel calls forth joy, while the knowledge of a shipwreck occasions grief: these are all distinct and intelligible sensations. But what a mingling of painful emotions, what a forlorn hope, a fearful foreboding, and terrible suspense, does the announcement that a ship is "Missing" produce in the minds of those interested therein!

There are many terms used in "Lloyd's List" which are fearfully significant. They afford us a brief concentration of disasters; a kind of summing up of maritime calamities. Thus we have—"A ship went down behind the pier"—"A strange vessel foundered"—"No assistance could be

given"—“Crew drowned”—“All on board lost”—“Not a soul saved.” These are short items, but how much of varied and intense suffering do they set forth!

Have you ever seen a merchant ship leaving harbour, with a fair breeze filling her sails; or entering the port with a goodly freight? Do you know aught of the pleasures or the dangers of the deep? Have you felt the delight of dashing through the dark blue waters with a favourable gale; or experienced the terror of the angry tempest, when the masts have gone by the board, when the bulwarks and quarters have been broken in, and the storm-beaten vessel, with parting timbers and six feet water in the hold, has laboured hard in the trough of the sea,

“One wide water all around her,
All above her one black sky?”

If you know all, or any of these things, you will not churlishly refuse to ponder the page that makes “Missing Ships” the subject of its remarks.

In days gone by, a friend who was dear to me set sail for Newfoundland. We had been school-fellows, and the bonds of friendship and affection that bound us together were strong; how did I yearn for his safe arrival!—but I will be brief. He had a fair voyage there, but the ship in which

he sailed on his return was not sea-worthy; nearly forty years have rolled by, yet never have I heard aught of the "Nancy" but this, that she was among the ships that were "Missing." Since then, what scenes of desperate pirates, and cruel bondage, and desert isles, and sharp-pointed rocks, and storms and shipwrecks, and drowning sailors, has my imagination drawn! How often in my fancy has my friend sprang forward, clad in the wretched attire of a broken-down seaman, to meet the grasp of my extended hand!

When a vessel has been wrecked, whatever may be the loss of cargo and life, distressing as the intelligence may be, a time comes when the tears of sorrow cease to fall, and the heart learns to be reconciled to its bereavement. There is a merciful provision in human cares, whereby, like the ocean waves, one swallows up another; but when does the time arrive that the announcement, "Ships Missing," can be read without a pang by those whom it concerns? It is, as I said, nearly forty years since the "Nancy" should have returned, and, even now, my eyes are brimming.

I am giving but a melancholy signification to the term "Ships Missing," but certainly not a more melancholy one than the case requires. I want to excite sympathy towards sailors. Their courage and their usefulness, their dangers and

their deprivations, should bind us to them. We owe them much ; much ought we to repay.

Let us suppose that we have relations and friends among the sailors of a missing ship : we will call her the Rover :

“She widely spread her snowy wing,
Like the sea-gull of the ocean,
And shaped her way, like a living thing,
Of graceful form and motion.”

But the time of her arrival is gone by : days, weeks, and months have passed, and no tidings have been received. She is still “Missing.” She may have been blown by stress of weather to the north or south, to the east or west ; but of this we know nothing. All is uncertainty, doubt, and fearful apprehension. One thing only we know, and that one thing we know too well, the ship is “Missing.”

By and by comes a rumour of a wreck off Antigua, in the West Indies. A squall caught the ship, when she could not clear the rocky headland that stretched out far into the sea. She struck upon the rock, her rudder was torn away, her sails rent, her masts went by the board, and the wild waters made a clear sea over her shattered hull.

Night came on, and the exhausted crew looked

up hopelessly at the lowering sky, that poured down a deluge of rain on their heads. Some tried to get ashore by their boats, but these were swamped, and went down with their crews. Another day came, and another night. One by one had the mariners been washed from the wreck, till a few only were left. At last the timbers gave way, the vessel parted at mid-ships, a wild cry was heard, and she was swallowed up by the wide yawning deep. One sailor only was flung alive on the rocky headland, to tell the fearful news of the shipwrecked vessel. Was this ship the Rover? No! but she may have shared a like disaster.

Next comes a newspaper fraught with sad intelligence. A gallant ship has been lost amid the icebergs of the north. She was hurried through Davis' Straits, and got frozen up in Baffin's Bay. The crew caught a few seals, and these eked out their scanty stock of provision. They then took a white bear and a walrus, but things grew worse and worse. Their sufferings were dreadful in that inhospitable clime. Almost famished, they made great exertions, sawed their way through the ice, and forced a passage through the floes; but a strong current carried the ship, when she was disabled, between two large drifting icebergs, which fast approached each other. It was a

dreadful moment when they met ; for the ship was between them, and her timbers were crushed as though they had been paper. One seaman only escaped, and he miraculously, to recount the loss of his companions. Think not that this vessel was the Rover. No ! she has never been heard of ; but who shall say that she did not founder amid the icebergs of the north ?

Now come advices from abroad ; a British merchantman has been boarded by pirates and captured. The cargo was taken away, the crew murdered, and the vessel scuttled. Surely this was not the Rover ? No, the Rover yet is " Missing." She may have been scuttled, her cargo taken, and her crew murdered. Fearful thought ! but we cannot tell how the case may be. We only know that she is yet " Missing."

Perhaps the next source of fearful information is the mate of a whaler, who says that when blown about by tempestuous weather among the South Sea Islands, they saw a merchant ship, which had struck on the rocks, boarded by savages in their canoes ; these he believed to be cannibals, and he fears the crew must have all fallen under their spears. The Rover is yet " Missing ;" what if she be the ship the mate has described ! The very thought is distressing.

Now comes a private letter from a captain

cruizing off Coromandel, relating the lamentable occurrence of a ship struck by lightning, and burned to the water's edge. The captain saw her when she was first struck, and stood towards her, but the weather was too rough to render her assistance. The consternation of the crew was terrible ; what with the tempest, and the heaving ocean, and the fire, they seemed distracted. The flames ran up the rigging, the blazing masts fell over the gunwale, the fire reached the powder room, the vessel blew up with a tremendous explosion, and not one of the crew escaped destruction. Is it possible that this vessel could be the Rover ? Very possible : the thought is horrible ; but we know no more. The Rover is still among the “ Missing :”

The ROVER is *missing!* her mariners sleep,
As we fear, in the depths of the fathomless deep ;
And no tidings shall tell if their death-grapple came
By disease or by famine, by flood or by flame.
The storm-beaten billows that ceaselessly roll
Shall hide them for ever from mortal control
And their tale be untold, and their history unread,
Till the dark caves of ocean shall give up their dead !

Perhaps you have paused and pondered, as well as I, on the announcement, “ Ships Missing ;” and you may have clothed the term with yet more melancholy significance than my pen has attached to it ; but do you feel real sympathy for the sons

of the ocean who breathe in storms and live in almost perpetual danger? With only a plank between them and a watery grave, they “go down to the sea in ships, and do business in great waters.” The winds that waft them to their desired haven may blow them on the rugged rock; the waves that bear them on their course may overwhelm them with destruction. Disease and war, and desperate hunger and raging thirst, and tempests, and lightning, and shipwreck, are ever in their track. One hour becalmed on a glassy sea, and another dashed headlong forward by the raging storm :

“ Mid dangerous shoals the sea-toss’d bark is borne,
By tempest shaken, and by lightnings torn ;
While freed from harm, perils are ever nigh,
Death’s shaft flies near her, *if it passes by.*”

How great our obligations to sailors! They have dared every danger, taken abroad our manufactures, brought back the produce and the riches of other lands. They have been the convoy of the missionary to distant climes, and the guardian of the Holy Scriptures, bearing them in safety across the wide world of waters. These things have been done; but have we repaid them? “We are verily guilty concerning our brother.”

We have seen that there is “but a step between him and death;” yet we have not instructed him

to seek eternal life. We have commended his bravery, laughed at his follies, and tolerated his guilty excesses ; but have we warned him of his danger, added to his true comfort, and sought his everlasting good ? Tell me not that there are societies for the sailors ; books, and ship libraries, and other advantages for these brave men. I know this ; but I know also that what has been done, compared with what ought to have been done, is but as a drop to the mighty ocean. A fraction only of the debt we owe has been paid.

Look again at the sailor in his dangers. I speak not now of the perils of the deep. You may bid me look at Greenwich Hospital if you will, and tell me that it is a noble institution, a princely asylum for disabled seamen, once thunderbolts of war ? Care has assuredly been taken to protect the mariners of king's ships from the evils of poverty ; but when was the arm of the nation raised to protect the sailor from himself ?

See him, with weak judgment and strong passions, approach his native land ! Girt around with temptations, with an uninstructed mind, and no principle to guard and guide him, he falls into the hands of the spoiler. "He goeth as an ox to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks." He is permitted to be the victim of the cruel, the rapacious, and the abandoned, who

devour his substance and “hunt for the precious life;” he drinks in iniquity like water; he is robbed alike of his money and his raiment, and is flung forth a degraded and penniless outcast, to beg or to starve.

Many years ago, a friend of mine put into my hand a letter written to him by Admiral Nelson, wherein, speaking of sailors, the Admiral quoted these lines:—

“ God and our sailor we alike adore,
In times of fear and danger, not before;
The danger o'er, both are alike requited,
God is forgotten, and the sailor slighted.”

And, truly, there is much point and truth in the quotation. What has been done for the welfare of sailors is creditable to the doers, but it will not excuse you and me. To our reproach will it be, if we find not out some means to do them good. I shall have sadly missed my object in noting down these feeble remarks on “Missing Ships,” if I have not moved you to think more kindly of seamen, and worked up your philanthropy to some practical expression of goodwill to sailors.

ON UNPROMISING SCENES.

THOUGH the country, to a lover of nature, is ever fair to look upon, yet there are moods of mind when the heart yearns with more than common desire for mountains and moors, green fields, and woods and waters. It was when in a mood of this kind that I found myself, the other day, in a spot which had very few attractions.

Had the prospect around me been a lovely one, which was far from the case, the dull, thick, heavy atmosphere would have prevented me from revelling in its beauties. I stood, as it were, cooped up between two low banks of earth, each of them having a ditch on the far side, and a flat field beyond ; one of these ditches was dry. Thus circumstanced, being weary, I sat me down on the brow of one of the banks, and having no distant object of interest to gaze on, I seemed of necessity constrained to look down into the dry ditch for a subject of speculation. You will readily admit that this presented me with only an unpromising scene.

There is nothing, however, like an inclination to turn “all occurrences to the best advantage.” An enterprising spirit and a grateful heart will seize upon some favourable point in the most forbidding landscape, and gild the gloomiest prospect under heaven. I soon discovered an abundant source of reflection in the following objects that lay scattered in the dry ditch before me, within the space of a few yards: an old hat, a broken flower-pot, the bowl of a tobacco pipe half-full of tobacco, an oyster shell, a dead cat, a piece of a letter on which was plainly written the word “Farewell!” a Dutch tile, a corroded tin kettle, the neck of a wine bottle, and a large bone. You shall have, as correctly as I can give them, my musings on the curious catalogue I have laid before you.

“ It would not be an easy thing to trace that well-worn, crownless, and almost brimless old hat to its original owner; nor should I be able to make out, without much trouble, whether it was sold by Christie, or bought at a slop shop in Leadenhall-street, Aldgate, or Houndsditch; but as it matters not two pins who was the buyer or who was the seller of it, I am content to leave the point unascertained. The history of a hat may be soon given from the moment it has passed through the necessary battening, hardening, work-

ing, blocking, napping, dyeing, stiffening, finishing, lining, and binding, and been exposed for sale in the window, till it lies, like the useless remnant there in the ditch, too tattered to defend, and too worthless to cover the brow of the meanest mendicant. It is for a time worn with pride and preserved with care, and not discarded, perhaps, till after its first renovation. It then has a second proprietor, loses grade, and passes rapidly on its downward career. The old clothesman, the coachman, cabman, and potboy, in their turns, become its possessors, till worn, drenched, crushed, and cuffed out of its property, it becomes, at last, the football of the idler, and the truant, and is kicked into the muddy ditch, the inglorious receptacle of all that is valueless and vile.

“It may be that the old worn-out beaver, there, in its better days adorned a banker’s brows, and in its decline covered the uncombed locks of the bricklayer and the beggar. Now, if it could tell only one-half of the worldly schemes and vain desires which dwelt in the heads of its several owners, a full-sized book might be written about it, though, perhaps, not of the most edifying character. There it lies, and there it is likely to lie, till its separated atoms are scattered abroad as manure to fertilize the ground.

"The broken flower-pot brings before me some pleasant pictures. It may have contained mignonette ; and the setting of the seed, the watching, the watering, and the springing up of the sweet-scented plant, may all have afforded pleasure to one who had no other garden. It may have stood in

'Some pretty window, that commands
Fair meadows green and wooded lands,
So sunny, that the latest ray
Its panes receive of parting day.'

Or it may have held a rose tree, a geranium, or a myrtle, the gift of a friend ; and I can imagine the bright eyes of the young, and the furrowed brows of the old, bending over it with interest. Oh, what an amount of quiet joy and peaceful delight has the Giver of all good conferred upon the human race in the green leaves, of plants and the painted petals of flowers !

"The tobacco-pipe bowl, half-full of tobacco, at once sets the smoker before me. I see his unwashed face and uncombed hair, his dirty and ragged attire, and his hat on his head, set on one side. I hear, too, his immoral jest and infidel laugh, as he pursues his sabbath-breaking course, with an ugly cur yelping before him. And now, am I not ashamed to have drawn such a picture

as this? How do I know but the pipe may have belonged to some honest and diligent workman, in the habit of indulging himself in a few whiffs at the close of his labour? How do I know but that, while the curling fume ascended towards heaven, his thoughts may have ascended too, in gratitude and praise to the Father of mercies for the ease and tranquillity he enjoyed? Shame! shame! for my want of that charity which ‘hopeth all things,’ and which should have influenced me even in drawing the sketch of an unknown smoker.

“I might content myself, when looking on the discarded oyster shell, in alluding to the too common practice among us of being friendly to those who have wherewith to serve us, and of flinging them away, or deserting them, when they no longer answer our purpose; and, indeed, though the reflection may be, as the adage has it, ‘as old-fashioned as Clent Hills,’ I hardly know one of the kind on which we could muse more profitably. Policy may say, ‘Where is the use of having aught to do with those who can be of no use to us?’ but Christian principle should bind us with the band of brotherhood to all mankind, to the rich and the strong, but especially to the poor and the helpless. The history of that oyster shell faithfully related would not be

without its interest, including as it should do all the scenes in which it has acted a part, from the season when it was first wrenched away from its dwelling-place on the ocean rock, to the moment when, flung edgewise into the air by the holiday-loving urchin, it alighted on its present place of degradation.

“The dead cat will hardly bear a reflection : for the ruffled fur, the projecting eye, and lacerated limb of poor grimalkin tell too plainly a tale of cruelty. A recent worry has taken place, and tabby, whose silky skin has so often been stroked with tenderness by the soft hand of her kind-hearted mistress, has at last, I fear, been set upon by cruel tormentors, and torn and mangled by their infuriated dogs. It would go hard with many if they were treated as they treat the brute creation !

“What a volume is comprised in that scrap of a note or letter, bearing the word ‘Farewell !’ The word is far from being written freely, but the writer may have been an indifferent scribe, or have sat down under circumstances of haste or emotion. The word may have been written by a parent to a child, or by a son or daughter to a parent ; by some soldier, about to pack up his knapsack for the march : or by some sailor, whose ship was soon to spread her sails for a foreign

shore. It may have been written with the light-heartedness of one bidding adieu for a day,

‘ Farewell ! come sunshine, wind, or rain,
To-morrow we shall meet again !’

Or it may have been flung on the paper by the hurried hand and agitated energy of one bidding farewell till ‘this mortal shall have put on immortality :’

‘ Farewell, then ! Farewell, then ! though bitter it be,
I will drink of the cup, for thou gavest it me ;
And I know that thou willingly wouldest not impart
A pang or a sorrow to trouble my heart.
Farewell, though the word be denouncing a doom !
Farewell, though it sound as a voice from the tomb !
Till the crash of creation shall sever the spell,
Farewell ! If for ever—for ever, Farewell !’

“ The Dutch tile, broken as it is at three of its corners, is still sufficiently entire to tell me that the blue picture on its surface is intended to represent the beheading of the giant Goliath. David is not exactly the fine stripling that I have always supposed he must have been, neither does Goliath quite come up to my *beau ideal* of a Philistine giant ; but we ought not to expect perfection in a painted Dutch tile more than in other things. I dare say it has had, in its time, many admirers ; nor will I, in its present low

estate, visit it with my reproach. Before now, I have been as much interested in the uncouth scriptural figures on a set of Dutch tiles, as if they had been drawn by Raffaelle and coloured by Titian.

“ How many a mess of pottage has been boiled in that old tin kettle I cannot say ; but it would by no means be a hazardous speculation to conclude that the utensil will never boil another. The handle is gone, its corroded sides are dented in, and that capacious hole at the bottom would puzzle a clever tinman to mend. But tin kettles were not intended to last for ever, and the one before me seems to have done its duty. Let us, then, learn a lesson from it, and do ours, and so long as we are fit for service render ourselves useful to mankind.

“ Were I a toper, the neck of the wine bottle might furnish me with a subject on which to descant for an hour ; and, even as it is, some turbulent festive scenes are rising before my fancy. However, I can take my choice, and either set the bottle, of which the glassy fragment was a part, on the sideboard of the intemperate, while the walls are ringing with the song of the drunkard ; or place it, filled with good wine, by a patient in the sick chamber, languishing with disease, and pain, and poverty, to whom it has

been sent by way of charity. I have now a scene like this latter one fresh in my remembrance wherein

‘A good man broke his own repose,
To mitigate another’s woes.’

carrying with him a bottle of port wine to a poor afflicted neighbour, who was all but exhausted with weakness : ‘Blessed is he that considereth the poor ; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble,’ Psa. xli. 1.

“And now I come to the large bone there, which, belonging, as no doubt it did, to some animal of the inferior creation, may yet well serve to remind me of my own mortality. It is a hard thing, while life is lustily beating in our hearts, and the warm blood healthfully rushing through our veins, to realize, even in imagination, that our frames will, indeed, be unstrung ; our bones actually disjointed, mingling with the earth that we now tread upon ; and yet the time is hastening on when this must be the case. Oh for a hopeful looking forward to the end of our pilgrimage, a cheerful conviction that through mercy we shall be permitted to finish our course with joy, and find the end thereof eternal life !

If,’ says a writer, ‘only one hour of joy be permitted me in time, let it be that which is nearest to eternity.’

“ We do well to mingle with the solemnities of death the brighter prospect of eternal life, and to regard our afflictions as the means by which God conveys to us our mercies :

‘ Sorrow, and tears, and woe are meant
To win the soul from sin and pain ;
And death is oft the herald, sent
To bid us seek immortal gain.”

You perceive that I have found enough to muse upon, even in the unpromising scene already described, and that the old hat, the broken flower-pot, the tobacco-pipe bowl, the oyster shell, the dead cat, the piece of a letter, the Dutch tile, the tin kettle, the neck of the wine bottle, and the large bone have been turned to some advantage. My observations may call forth yours ; at all events, there is a moral in my musings ; it is this, That you should never be cast down by the most hopeless case ; but, on the contrary, make the best of the most unpromising scene.

ON LAUGHTER.

It is an old observation, that mankind have three marks set upon them, whereby one person is known from another. We know our friends when we see them, by their appearances ; when we do not see them, by their voices ; and when they are at a distance from us, by their handwriting. I am half tempted to add a fourth mark ; for most of our friends, might, I think, be identified by their laughter.

Some express the lightness of their hearts by their Ha, ha, ha's ! or their He, he, he's ! others are equally emphatic in their Hi, hi, hi's ! and their Ho, ho, ho's ! while others indulge in boisterous laughter, which is mirth in convulsions. Some men, by their continual giggling, seem to take the laughing philosopher for their model, who held that there was nothing in the world worth crying for ; while others, adopting the opposite opinion, appear to consider a laugh as next neighbour to a sin. For my own part, I cannot but

regard the faculty of laughter as one of the goodly gifts of our almighty and indulgent Creator, enabling us, at the same moment, to make our hilarity audible, to relieve our joy-oppressed hearts, and to communicate the same pleasurable emotion to others. An ill-natured laugh is a reproach to any one ; but a kind-hearted, good-natured laugh is so good a thing, in my estimation, that I regret it should ever be indulged in unreasonably or unseasonably.

There is as great a variety in laughter as in other things. Some laugh till the tears roll down their cheeks. Some hold their sides, as if under no small apprehension of their ribs giving way ; while others indulge, amid their paroxysms, in the expression, “Oh, my back ! my back !” as though pleasure and pain, ecstasy and agony, were mingled together in such an unbearable degree of intensity, that enjoyment and endurance were equally afflictive. I remember a painful instance of a fit of laughter continuing for several hours, with very slight intermission. Wearied and exhausted beyond measure, the unhappy laugher could not restrain her emotion : if for an instant her excitement subsided, a recurrence to the cause of her extravagant mirth instantly reproduced it.

I once had a German neighbour, a man of

small stature, of friendly habits and hasty temper, who was a most extraordinary laugher. Then again, his laugh was of so strange a kind ; for though I have heard all sorts of laughter, from the wide-mouthed burst, or rather bellow, distinguishable at the distance of good part of a mile, to the writhing, inaudible giggle, which consists of spasmodic motion, and not of sound ; yet never has a laugh regaled my ears like the spirit-stirring Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha ! of my German neighbour.

This laugh was made up of five sonorous Ha's ! uttered rapidly in the same tone. It had no preparatory announcement ; no unnecessary appendages ; no lingering accessories : but came forward by itself, and stood alone, based on its own merits. It was a full-bodied, proud, and princely pouring-out of a mirthful heart. Most laughers give notice of the coming clap, which dies away by degrees, and after it has passed, they require some time to compose themselves ; but not so with my neighbour. He withdrew from his mouth his cigar or his ornamented hookah, just long enough to peal out his Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha ! in parenthesis, and then resumed his whiffing occupation, as though insensible that any interruption had taken place. If a friend entered the house, he was received with the royal salute,

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha ! When he left it, the same noble discharge did honour to his departure. At all times, and on all occasions—morning, noon, and night; spring, summer, autumn, and winter—the Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha ! of my neighbour was ever ready.

A change came over his worldly affairs, and my German neighbour left his habitation. Days, weeks, months, nay, years flew round, and I knew not whether he were on this, or on the other side the seas. This is, indeed, a world of change, and when for a protracted season we lose sight of our friends or neighbours, we, with some reason, speculate on their departure, and number them among the dead. They “that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth,” are not expected to have here an abiding dwelling place, “Ah !” thought I, “my poor neighbour is, most likely, in his narrow house.”

I was sitting one day with my book before me, now pondering its pages, and now musing on the past, the present, and the future, when suddenly a well-known sound burst upon my ears. You have already guessed what it was, and you have guessed aright. It was the well-remembered laugh of my some-time neighbour, unimpaired in power, undiminished in duration, and

unchanged in character : the Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha ! of days gone by, rang through the walls of the adjoining chamber. My old neighbour was paying a transitory visit to a friend in his old habitation, and could hardly do less than indulge in his accustomed greeting. The hour passed, his visit drew to an end, and as he walked away, a right royal open-air Ha, ha, ha, ha ! proclaimed his departure.

We are told in the book of Proverbs that "even in laughter the heart is sorrowful ;" and, now and then, instances occur wherein the truth of the text is painfully set forth. As there is no peace to the wicked, so it follows that their outward mirth is mingled with inward care. How hollow must be the mirth of one who is in continual fear ! and how heartless the laughter of him who, on account of his crimes, has ever in prospect before him the loss of life or liberty !

In looking back on the past, many a laughing friend rises to my remembrance. The time, the occasion, the family group, or friendly gathering, with the various attitudes of the mirthful guests, are all before me, and the laughter-loving playmates of my youth are strangely mingling with the less numerous companions of my age. "There is a time to laugh ;" and happy is he

who enjoys it, without ever mistaking or abusing the occasion.

How it may be with you I know not, but, of late, my laughs have been “few and far between.” Not that my heart is disposed to be less joyous than it used to be, when fit opportunities call it forth, but that mournful occasions have more frequently abounded.

Mirth may not trespass on the place
Where silent Sadness reigns ;
Nor rudely laugh in Sorrow’s face,
Nor smile where Grief complains !

Laughter, to be lawful, should observe two points : it should neither give pain to another, nor bring after-sorrow on ourselves. He who cannot call to mind the laughter of yesterday without feeling remorse or self-reproach on account of it to-day, has been merrier than he ought to have been.

More than once have I stated my opinion, that the very peculiarities of our friends are dear to us, for they form a part of themselves. A change in the cut of their clothes, or an alteration in their gait, would be a loss to us. Unless a peculiarity be something worse than whimsical, I cannot spare it in a friend. He must look, move, speak, cough, and *laugh*, just as he used

to do ; for if in all, or any, of these points he make a change, he practises an innovation, and thereby defrauds me of a part of himself.

Give me the spare, angular form of one friend, and the broad back of another, with the spindle leg, the round face, the bare head, the furrowed brow, and the limping foot, as the case may be, of the rest of them, for I could hardly spare the crutch of the cripple I esteem. Take away, at your peril, so much as a freckle off their faces, or a knee-buckle from their attire. I claim them as they are in their manner, mien, voice, and general behaviour ; in their gaieties and their gravities, their laughter and their tears.

The cares of the world are so many, and find their way so readily into almost every hour of almost every day of the year, that we require a degree of cheerfulness to counteract them. As a new broom cleans away the dust and cobwebs of an unswept apartment, so does a burst of buoyancy sweep away the dust and cobwebs of a beclouded mind. Cheerfulness is to us, when inclined to be careworn, as a cool, clear draught to the traveller ; it recruits our strength and spirits, and we start afresh in the path of duty, more able to bear the toil of our pilgrimage.

If you gather nothing more from my remarks, you will at least gather this—that I regard the

faculty of laughter as one of the goodly gifts of God, for which we are all bound to be thankful. Oh, how I love to hear the cheerful laugh of a kind-hearted man among a group of merry children !

ON THE EXPRESSION “WE LET THEM DIE.”

WHETHER my pen has already touched upon the subject of irresolution and a want of perseverance, my memory is not sufficiently retentive to determine; but, however this may be, I feel urged to give utterance to my present thoughts. Not more dependent is the fire on the fresh fuel that supports it, than is man, in his undertakings, on the motives and fresh impulses that animate his heart.

Now and then, in my walks, I pass by a row of houses in ruins: some of these dwellings are without roofs, others without doors and windows, and none of them were ever entirely finished. When first their foundations were dug, no doubt the builder intended to complete his work; but unexpected occurrences took place. Perhaps, like a man who begins to build a tower without counting the cost, he found the expense

too great for him ; perhaps his attention was called aside by other objects ; or, it might be, that some new plan presented itself to his mind, and jaundiced him against the old one ; but whatever was the case, as I said, the houses were never finished ; and now, in their ruins, they furnish me with a striking illustration of the manifold embryo undertakings of mankind, which are never brought to maturity.

What goodly resolutions do we form, and how resolutely do we purpose to maintain them ! Sometimes they refer to the Eternal, whose glorious name we desire to honour, whose holy law we resolve to obey, and to whose service we yearn to devote ourselves afresh, with all the energy of our hearts, and all the enthusiasm of our souls. Sometimes they refer to our fellow-beings ; a consciousness comes over us of a duty unperformed ; we have some injury to forgive, some worthy, though distressed, sufferer to relieve, or some neglected friend to address with affection. Sometimes they refer to ourselves, some error we are bent to correct, some bad habit we are resolved to overcome, or some benevolent object we are determined with untiring perseverance to pursue. Our hearts beat, and our pulses play ; we bend our knees with all the fervour of devotion at the throne of grace for strength to aid us in our weakness ; and we go

forth, strong as a giant refreshed with wine, steady in our purpose to be faithful, even unto death, in our undertaking. To-morrow comes, all our fervour is abated, our resolution weakened, and our attention drawn aside to other objects of regard. A few days, or weeks, or months are added to the annals of revolving time, and where are the goodly resolutions that engrossed our very being? We allow them to pass from our remembrance—*we let them die*—and they are as though they had never been, or, at best, only arise at intervals to our remembrance, to upbraid us for our inconstancy.

Let us look for a moment at domestic life. Little master must have a white mouse: it will be so pleasant to see him turn round his wiry cage—he will take such care of him, and feed him every morning. Oh, yes! he must have a white mouse. Little miss wishes to have a canary. She promises to give him seed, and fill his water-glass with her own hand; so she really must have a canary! The bird and the white mouse are bought, and dearly are they loved and petted, and very regularly are they fed; but, in process of time, a squirrel is introduced in a new ornamented brass-wire cage, and then the canary and the white mouse are gradually neglected, until, at last, they are both found dead at

the bottom of their cages for want of food. As with the poor mouse and bird, so has it been with some of my most favourite plans. I have delighted in them for a season, and afterwards abandoned them ; first I have petted them, and then I have *let them die.*

A book, perhaps, has been read by me, wherein a bright example of kindness, benevolence, or generosity has kindled my spirit. I, too, would be kind, benevolent, and generous ; I, too, would show that virtue was alive in my heart. It was a thing settled and done in my determination, that I would not be behind-hand with any being below the stars in such thoughts, and words, and deeds, as those which had called forth my admiration. There might be something eccentric in these warm-hearted emotions, something to smile at ; but there was, also, sincerity. The worst of it was, that, like the dew of the morning, these glowing determinations passed away. For a season they lived within me, and then, I *let them die.*

Oh, why should visions fair and bright
Thus fade, and vanish from our sight ?

Again and again, when no eye has been on me, but the eye of the Omnipresent, moved by some outward circumstance, or inward monition, have

I rigidly examined myself, baring my own bosom, and dissecting my own heart. My errors have been acknowledged, mourned over, and renounced, and I have steadfastly resolved, looking, alas ! more to my own energies than to the Source of all strength, to renounce them for ever. How resolutely have I determined to fight ! How triumphantly have I exulted in my conquests ! Strong as I was, I became weak. Full as my resolvings were of life and vigour, I *let them die*.

Often have I stood gazing on the sunlit clouds of heaven, their glory blinding my eyes, and their beauty gladdening my spirit, till my mind has been moved to some course of holy plan or virtuous action ; some high-wrought aspiration has been embodied and moulded into a distinct form and purpose : and as often have I been gently influenced by the silvery moon, gliding through the clear blue sky, to the same virtuous end. At such a day of the year, and at such an hour of the day, would I renew the covenant with myself, that I then had made. Neither health nor sickness, riches nor poverty, success nor disappointment, should deter me in my righteous undertaking. The midday sun and the midnight moon have both been witnesses of my emotion on such occasions, and they are witnesses still—but of what ? Not of my strength of purpose, my

unbroken courage, and my perseverance, but of my weakness, my irresolution, and my inconsistency. Had I, seeking Divine aid, kept my emotions alive, all had been well, and I should have gained my ends. But no ! I *let them die* ; and with them died, also, the enterprises I had undertaken.

Is it not thus with us all, from childhood to hoary age ? Does not the boy leave his whip for a drum, his drum for a peg-top ; his peg-top for a kite ; and his kite for a cricket-bat or ball ? Is not each, in its turn, desired and neglected ? attained with ardour, and flung aside with apathy ? And does not man, in like manner, show the same love of change ; the same fickleness of purpose in the objects of his regard ? One new project takes the place of another ; he plans what he does not execute ; he begins what he has not energy to finish. Rarely does a year pass without witnessing the death of one favourite design, and the birth of another. Enterprise after enterprise and project after project we call into being, and then *we let them die*.

Hundreds and hundreds attempt languages ; they learn a little grammar, conjugate a few verbs, write a few exercises, commit to memory a few phrases, and then abandon their design. Thousands and thousands undertake music, and after

afflicting their neighbours with their dissonance, fling aside the instruments which at first afforded them so much delight. Some begin to learn short-hand, but fall strangely short of its attainments ; while others make large pretensions in other pursuits, which are in their turn neglected and forgotten. Thus, labouring without profit ; ploughing and sowing, and reaping no harvest ; paying a price, without securing the purchase, we go on, arousing within us a spirit of achievement, and then *letting it die*.

But, though it is so frequently thus in the common affairs of life, this want of perseverance and stability is yet more strikingly shown in holy things. Where is the Christian man who could not, were he humble-minded and open-hearted enough to acknowledge his infirmity ; where is the most highly favoured of the followers of the Redeemer, who could not tell of seasons, wherein he has said, like the slothful man, "There is a lion in the way ;" and wherein he has done like the children of Ephraim, who, "being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle ?" Reason have we, indeed, to cry aloud to the Strong for strength, that our energies may be sustained, that our determinations may be kept alive, and that we may not *let them die*.

Do you know nothing, reader, of this weakness of resolution, this infirmity of purpose, this want of perseverance? Did you never, when reading the word of the Most High, or listening to some faithful minister of the gospel, whose heart, running over with zeal and love, and whose lip, touched with a burning coal from the altar of the Eternal, were both affectionately and eloquently addressing you; did you never feel moved to an ejaculation of feeling, a prayer of earnest desire, and a holy purpose amounting to this—From this day forward, come health or sickness, joy or sorrow, others may do as they will, “but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord?” And have you not, in spite of the glow that you felt in your bosom, and the tear that swam in your eye, afterwards become cold and worldly-minded? In a word, did you go on, or draw back from your hallowed resolution? Did you maintain your ardour, or did you *let it die*?

I would rather that you should pursue this subject than myself, my pen having already run on to some length. If you put down half the things of which it may be said with truth *we let them die*, the catalogue will be found to be a long one. While, however, to our reproach, we let friends die, and opportunities of doing good, and noble resolves, and high-wrought emotions, and

benevolent plans, and hallowed resolutions, there are some things, more than others, that we should take especial care to keep alive in our memory ; and the truth that Jesus Christ died for sinners, and that “ He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them,” Heb. vii. 25, is among them. This should not languish in our regard. This should be kept fresh and unfading in our remembrance : whatever else may die, this truth should live for ever. Let past remembrances lead to present humiliation, and to earnest prayer that the Holy Spirit may bring former lessons to our remembrance, and enable us, whatever we do, to do all to the glory of God.

ON MYSTERIOUS ADVERTISEMENTS.

ALMOST every reader of the public journals, especially of "The Times," must have been, at one season or other, arrested by the mysterious advertisements which not unfrequently appear. These advertisements are usually the mediums of communication between those who are ignorant of each other's whereabouts, or who, knowing it, have motives for avoiding the accustomed channel of epistolary correspondence. Whim, policy, deceit, interest, shame, fear, crime, and other things less censurable than some of these, have their full share in such mysterious communications.

Suppose, as this subject seems novel, we take a glance at a file of "The Times," making a brief comment on such articles of the mysterious kind as may take our attention. Here is one to begin with, and no doubt we shall find others as we proceed. We will treat each advertisement as if it had but just appeared in the newspaper.

"B. will be glad of a private interview with C. at his convenience."

And who are B. and C.? and with what object is this private interview to take place? The wide field of conjecture is open—there is ample room for speculation. The case, whatever it be, is not an urgent one; it is no affair of life and death; or it would not be allowed to stand over in so leisurely a way to suit the convenience of C. Perhaps B. is an attorney, or a surgeon, or a monied man; and C. has applied to him for counsel, or assistance. Or, perhaps C. has to communicate something of supposed importance to B. But if we guess for an hour, it will bring us not a whit nearer the truth. The interview must take place, and all that we can do is to hope that it will be to the advantage of both parties.

"E. P. wishes to hear of his friends."

Ay, but how comes it that E. P. is absent from his friends? or how is it that he does not give them an address, thereby enabling them to hold direct communication with him without useless expense and trouble? Is he hiding himself? or wandering without a settled home? or afraid to trust them with his place of abode? Charity that hopeth all things, should lead us to put the kindest construction on the conduct of others.

It may be, that E. P. has good reasons for remaining in the shade ; but while we hope this, we have reason for fears.

“ G. A. F.—I am glad to find you admit your conduct to be indefensible in quitting your home and employment ; pray, therefore, consider the anxiety we are all in, and the dangerous state of your poor mother, and return home immediately. We shall not reproach you, be assured ; but, on the contrary, will do all in our power to remove any cause of unhappiness. G. F.”

It seems that G. A. F. has taken the first proper step to recover his lost ground—he has acknowledged his error. Let us hope that the second will be taken by him also : and that he will gladden the heart of his poor mother by returning to his employment : with contrition, humility of mind and an earnest seeking for God’s blessing, the worst case may be mended. Get back, G. A. F., to the point whence you wandered into crooked pathways. “ Rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God,” Joel ii. 13, and you will find that there is yet peace in store for you.

“ Alpha is informed that his information shall be considered strictly confidential, and that he shall be subjected to no annoyance whatever in consequence of giving it.”

And what is the delinquency, Alpha, that thou art about to disclose? and who are they whose misconduct thou hast made up thy mind to arraign? If conscience urges thee on, speak and act boldly; but if thou art moved by interest, envy, hatred, or malice, make a pause.

“Boatswain may proceed—Hambro’, May 3rd.”

Have we a smuggler here, and is Hambro’ the place of rendezvous? Hambro’, or Hamburg, is a free city of Germany, seated on the rivers Elbe and Alster, famous for commerce; and it may be that Boatswain is thus directed to proceed there by his employer, who is not aware exactly of his present situation. This is a mere conjecture, an arrow shot at a venture, perhaps very wide of the mark; but if Boatswain be really a contraband dealer, the sooner he quits his questionable occupation, and gets into an honest calling, the better. “He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known,” Prov. x. 9.

“To Alfred.—The letter has come safely to hand, for which accept a thousand thanks.”

A welcome communication it seems, conveying good tidings, or containing some substantial proof of remembrance, kindness, or affection. The safe arrival, however, of the letter being acknowledged in the newspaper, implies some mystery—some

motive on the part of Alfred why he should not be addressed openly. Perhaps we had better not pursue the subject farther, lest it lead to the conclusion, that though possibly it may be a case of kindness, probably it is not unalloyed with error.

"Should this meet the eye of L. W., she is earnestly entreated to go immediately to her mother's at Kensington, where she will be affectionately received, and everything forgiven. Her family and friends are in the deepest anguish and distress of mind, and timely attention to this may prevent fatal consequences."

And is L. W. one of the many mistaken wanderers who seek abroad what they have not endeavoured to secure at home? who hope to find more peace with strangers than with their friends? A home and a mother are among the last things that should be willingly forsaken; and L. W. will no doubt find, if she have not found already, that a false step is much easier taken than it is retraced. At present, her parent has a home and a heart open to her, and it will be well if she undervalues neither the one nor the other.

"To A. B. X.—Yes; B. C. will meet him tomorrow any time he may fix, or on Saturday before 12 o'clock. B. C., Post Office, Strand."

There is a business-like appearance in this advertisement—a promptitude and straightforwardness that intimate the parties are anxious to settle the point between them. The time specified, too, “before 12 o’clock,” gives the affair a daylight openness, that relieves it from sinister associations ; and yet, after all, it may be other than it appears. No doubt by this time A. B. X. has put his hand to paper, and that now a letter for B. C. is lying at the Strand Post Office.

“F—y and M—ie are once more implored to return to their broken-hearted parents. All will be forgiven if they return. M—ie should well consider for what and for whom she forsakes father, mother, brothers, and little sister, all of whom pray and implore her to return to them. E—.”

F—y, you are treading in slippery pathways ! M—ie, you are planting thorns in your pillow ! The seeds you are sowing will spring up, and bud, and blossom, and bear bitter fruit. Oh that entreaty could reach you, enter into your erring hearts, and sink into your souls ! To-day may be in time ; to-morrow may be too late to return ! Why should ye wring the hearts that love you, and bring on yourselves deep remorse ?

“ March 3rd.—W. C. M.”

He must be a shrewd guesser who could give

even a probable signification to this advertisement. The date given may set forth the time of a birth, a baptism, a wedding, or a death. It may announce a period for an interview for the payment of a debt, the sailing of a ship, the quitting a habitation, or the entering on a new engagement. It may refer to a trifle or a thing of importance ; it may be connected with good or evil ; it may be wholly confined to time, or it may lead to consequences stretching out to eternity.

“A. M. B.—Return, and, by medical treatment, you may recover from your present state of mental aberration. The sufferings of your friends cannot be expressed.”

A melancholy case this, no doubt. A. M. B., instead of shunning his friends, should seek them, and remain among them. Whether his malady be brought about by imprudence, by looking on wine when it appears bright in the glass, or whether it be a direct visitation of the Almighty, he should hedge himself round with the protection, counsel, and kindness of those who are interested in his welfare. A wanderer from his friends with a disturbed intellect is indeed a pitiable being.

“To B. A.—Five pounds will be given.”

That is, in all probability, on condition that he shall do what he has undertaken to do—give

promised information, convey to its owner the article he has found, or explain the process with which he is acquainted. He has, no doubt, to earn his five pounds in some way or other, unless he have already rendered a service which this sum is intended to recompence. If B. A. be rich, the five pounds will hardly be worth his acceptance; but if he be poor, it may greatly add to his comforts. At any rate, let us hope that the service done, or to be done, is an honest one, and that the reward will be well laid out.

“Anonymous letter.—If ‘One who wishes to be honest,’ will communicate confidentially relative to the system of abstraction, he may rely on secrecy, and will be remunerated for his trouble. Address to J. P.”

And now a settled plan of dishonesty, a system of abstraction, is to be brought to light. “Honesty is, indeed, the best policy.” The ground will now crumble beneath the feet of those who imagine they stand safely. So true it is, that “there is no peace to the wicked.” The writer of the letter seems to be one who cannot rest by night, or be at ease by day, while he is a partaker with evil doers. The sooner he despatches a letter to J. P. the better, but his accepting a recompence will render the rectitude of his intentions questionable.

"Should this meet the eye of C. E. M., who left his home early on Monday last, and is supposed either to have gone, or is about to go, abroad, and he will write to his parents, he will now find that they are anxious to further his views."

Perhaps here has been a mutual error. C. E. M. may have fixed his mind on some course, unreasonable, either in itself, or as to the manner or time of pursuing it, and his parents may have been harsh, arbitrary, or uncomplying. Matters have arrived at a crisis, and C. E. M., in anger or despair, has left his home, either to carry out his plans, or recklessly to seek a foreign land. It is very doubtful whether C. E. M. will ever cast his eyes on the advertisement, or, seeing it, return home, till resentment is exchanged for repentance. "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged," Col. iii. 20, 21.

"C. N. J.—T. regrets exceedingly what has occurred. It was done in a moment of irritation, and C. N. J. may be assured, if he will forget it, the same shall never occur again. Direct to T., care of ——."

Oh, what mischief has the tongue occasioned! Truly, "the tongue can no man tame," Jas. iii. 8.

What terrible consequences have followed anger! "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls," Prov. xxv. 28. Again and again, no doubt, T. has read the words, "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry," Eccl. vii. 9, and "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another," Eph. iv. 31; and yet he has allowed his temper to burst forth as a flood: so that he has either said or done that which has fallen like scalding oil on another's heart, and which is now a cause of deep affliction to his own. If C. N. J. is wise, he will not absent himself as a fugitive, fostering resentment; but rather forgive the offence committed against him, and proffer the hand of fellowship to the offender. The wounds inflicted by passion are often difficult to heal; and judging by the earnestness of T., he has great doubts whether his trespass will be passed over. Well would it be, did we all of us heed more the exhortation, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men," Rom. xii. 18.

Having thus far proceeded, it will be needless to prosecute the subject farther. Different readers will attach different meanings to the paragraphs quoted; and many will, perhaps, give shrewder

guesses than mine as to their real signification. A public journal is an epitome of life, an abridged account of every-day human affairs ; and the mysterious advertisements which appear in its columns constitute one of its peculiarities. The quotations we have given, and the comments we have made thereon, may draw the attention of many to the subject, and thus the mysterious advertisements of "The Times" may excite increased interest, and afford additional gratification.

ON
ANGER AND ADMIRATION.

HOWEVER desirable it may be to keep the spirit tranquil, and to have the heart filled with brotherhood and affection for mankind, I hardly know how we can preserve our distinctions of right and wrong uninjured, without fostering an ardent love for that which is good, and a strong abhorrence of that which is evil. He who can hear of an act of generosity and kindness without manifesting admiration, or witness a deed of oppression and cruelty without feeling emotions of indignant anger, can scarcely be estimated either as the enemy of vice, or the friend of virtue and humanity.

The great difficulty, however, is to practise, at the same time, Christian integrity and Christian charity, neither allowing our kindly feelings to cloak evil, on the one hand, nor to permit our zeal to degenerate into bitterness, on the other. In judging the errors of others, we should bear

in mind our own infirmities ; and in condemning sinful men, our own sinfulness should never be forgotten.

Now, I am rather afraid the very errors which my pen has here pointed out for others to avoid, are those into which I myself have frequently fallen. Hardly can I hope to have escaped the inconsistency of being too indulgent in some cases, and too severe in others ; but leaving this matter altogether undecided, let me briefly allude to some of the many characters, among mankind, which have either moved me with anger, or called forth my admiration.

When glancing over the pages of infidel books, before now, I have felt very, very angry with their writers. A score others, besides Voltaire and Paine, have excited my wrath in no moderate degree. If it be a bad deed to take a poor man's bread, it must be still worse to take away his hope. Though I can make a liberal allowance for diversity of opinion, and do feel more sorrow than anger for an infidel, yet I cannot but be greatly moved by those who, by ribaldry and jesting, can lightly rob a poor man of that which is more to him than the oil of his joints and the marrow of his bones. Those who can hinder pilgrims in their way to heaven for the paltry gratification of showing their own cleverness

in placing impediments in the road, must be, indeed, the enemies of mankind.

Caligula, who made his horse consul and high priest, who attempted to famish Rome, who put innocent people to death for his amusement, and fed wild beasts with human victims in his palaces; Nero, who assassinated his mother, sacrificed his wife, set Rome on fire, and played on an instrument of music during the conflagration; and Dionysius, who for his tyranny and cruelty was execrated as a monster, with a throng of ruthless oppressors of the same relentless character, have roused my indignation in youth, in manhood, and in years; and, had not a better influence than my own restrained me, I could have almost poured maledictions on their memory.

How often have those demons incarnate, Pizarro and Cortes, the former the cruel conqueror of Peru, and the latter the sanguinary oppressor of Mexico, greatly ruffled my spirit when it was at peace, and made me bitter when I was meek-minded and merciful! I could have borne with their hateful ambition, and forgiven their greedy thirst of gold; but their ruthless tyranny, their reckless cruelty, and their wholesale slaughter of a people, perhaps the most timid and defenceless on the earth, is absolutely intolerable. The ravenous wolf and ferocious tiger will cease to pursue their prey when

gorged to the full; but unceasing treachery, rapine, violence, and murder, marked the career of these human scourges of the western world.

Many fearful accounts are related of the Spanish inquisitors, and never did a more selfish and cold-blooded set of wretches band themselves together in conspiracy against humanity. Oh, how my blood has boiled in my veins at what I have read of the deceit, hypocrisy, oppression, and horrible cruelty of these sleek-headed, murderous fiends, in their hidden dungeons of silence, mystery, terror, and abomination! It is bad enough to see the grim-visaged, broad-breasted villain, in his lawless career of pillage and murder; but when all that is bad, and bitter, and relentless, and abominable, lurks beneath a head slightly sprinkled with grey hairs, and disguises itself in the garb of sanctity, wickedness becomes doubly wicked, and cruelty more cruel: the knife seems to carry a keener edge, and the dagger to wear a sharper point. I am ashamed of what I have felt when calling to mind the enormities of these Spanish inquisitors.

The slaughter-breathing bigotry and unrelenting bitterness of Gardiner, Stokesley, and the royal tigress, queen Mary, have often made my eye and my heart glow with anger; and that monster of a man, the scourge of God's people,

that bloated, brutal, martyr-burning Bonner, is another who has harrowed up my heart, and called into exercise the fiercest passions of my soul. When I have pictured him brow-beating the meek and lowly, striking on the mouth, with his ruffian fist, the defenceless, torturing the prisoner in his captivity, and, with malignant glee, delivering over to the burning stake the servants of the Lord ; forgetful of my own infirmities, and of the meekness that ought to characterize Christian men, I have risen upon him in my wrath, I have beaten him with many stripes, I have smitten him under the fifth rib, I have hewed him in pieces as Samuel hewed Agag in Gilgal.

But enough of anger, for it suits me not ; my fit is over ; and were Gardiner and Stokesley, or even Bonner and queen Mary now by my side, I should feel for them something very like compassion. Let me turn to some of those who have made me in love with humanity. I have a strong predilection for all who have publicly or privately added to the general hoard of human happiness. All who have increased the knowledge, the comfort, and the joy of human beings, or lessened their griefs and cares, have a place in my affections.

As I have received much of pleasure from the travels of such as have wandered in distant lands, I ought to bear them in my kindly remembrance.

Humboldt, Bruce, Bullock, and Belzoni ; Denham, Steadman, and Mungo Park ; Parry, Ross, and Franklin ; Clarke, Campbell, Hall, Waterton, Lander, and Catlin, with a goodly throng of others, are entitled to my regard. While reading their works, I have entered into their adventures, shared their dangers, and felt interested in their safety and success.

To authors of well-directed talents and virtuous affections, my gratitude is as unbounded as the debt which I owe them. A catalogue of all I love would indeed be a lengthy one. Painters, and sculptors, and engravers, have made me their debtor. Nor would I forget the labours of such as have smoothed the path of literature, explained and defined words, and rendered the reference to Holy Scripture more easy than before. Among these, Johnson, with his Dictionary, and Cruden, with his Concordance, I hold in high estimation.

Upright judges, and talented and conscientious members of the healing art, and founders of hospitals, asylums, and almshouses, and liberal contributors to Christian and benevolent institutions, and promoters of Sunday Schools—Raikes, and Fox, and Lancaster, and, Bell, among them ; there are none of these that I do not greatly honour. Nor are the kind-hearted friends of animals, defenceless animals, unentitled to my warmest thanks.

The ministers of the gospel have won their way to my highest regard. John Wickliff, the morning star of the Reformation ; and the uncompromising Martin Luther, who, when dissuaded from attending the Diet of Worms, replied, that if he knew there were as many devils there as tiles on the houses, he would face them all. Bradford, Cranmer, Latimer, Hooper, Knox, and Jewell, with Hall, Leighton, Hopkins, Watts, Doddridge, Whitefield, Wesley, and a hundred more ; these were not men of parts only, but men of piety ; not merely the friends of mankind, but also, in the midst of their infirmities, good, and true, and faithful servants of the Lord.

Though it is now time to close my remarks, this must not be done without one word being spoken to the memories of missionaries who have finished their course, and found the end to be eternal life. I cannot think of such men as Eliot, and Swartz, and Brainerd, and Henry Martyn, without honouring them for their labours. Their memory is dear to me. I read the record of their earthly existence with intensity of interest and unfeigned admiration, and I love to contemplate them as among the shining ones, now gathered around the throne of the Eternal.

Were I altogether to omit Wilberforce in my rapid glance at the friends of humanity, I should

do an equal injustice to his memory and my own affections. As one of the brightest examples of Christian philanthropy, he is one of those whom I delight to honour.

One word would I utter aloud amid the avalanches of Switzerland and Savoy. Ye monks of St. Bernard, I never visited your hospitable mountain-home ; ye have never warmed me with your welcome amid your eternal snows, nor spread your homely board in ministering to my necessities ; but when I hear of your opening your doors freely to the frozen stranger, and sending out your very dogs on errands of mercy, my heart yearns towards you with more than admiration. I stop not to scrutinize the orthodoxy of your faith, I make no inquiry about the soundness of your creed, but regarding you as a mercy-loving brotherhood, I pour on you a warm-hearted blessing, and take upon myself, in the fulness of my affections, to thank you on behalf of those you have benefited by your kindness.

Who ever hears the name of Howard without offering him the homage of the heart for a life devoted to benevolence and humanity ? For myself, my affections have been fully drawn out in the contemplation of his benevolent career. Not only in spirit have I attended him through the prisons of England and France, the gloomy jails

of Germany and Holland, and the damp, dismal, and infected dungeons of Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Turkey, but at Cherson also, with clasped hands and bended knees, hanging over the good Samaritan in his dying hour. Nor doubt I that this devoted Christian, this mitigator of so much sorrow on earth, has had an abundant entrance into the joys of heaven.

You have now had enough of my admiration, and perhaps more than enough of my anger: try to turn the one and the other to account, and then, whether I have acted wisely or not in noting down these observations, you will be sure to act wisely in making them useful.

OLD HUMPHREY TURNED FISHERMAN.

IF, on reading the above title, your fancy should portray me going out at peep of day, at noon, or at dewy eve, as a real brother of the angle and the ingle, with the several parts of a fishing-rod nicely packed together, a tin box well supplied with several kinds of baits, and a basket gracefully suspended from a belt slung across my right shoulder ; if you should suppose me, like another Isaac Walton, wending my way to the quiet nooks of the running brook, my mind occupied with peaceful thoughts and gentle musings, wishing ill to none, and good to all, purposing to give away all the fish I catch, and disposed, as fishermen have in very doubtful sentimentality expressed themselves, to use “the very worm with humanity, handling him tenderly, and treating him as a friend ;”—if such a picture as this should present itself to your minds, dismiss it at once, for I am not in quest of the finny tribe. They are human

beings that I mean to catch, and it shall go hard with me but you shall be among the number.

More than forty winters have cast their snows on the earth, and as many summer suns have set forth the power and goodness of God by gilding the heavens and the earth with glory, since I last baited a hook or cast a line upon the waters. I have no accusation against the scaly inhabitants of the wave, and they can advance no reasonable complaint against me, unless it be that of having, now and then, temperately partaken of a turbot or a salmon at another's table, or of a sole, an eel, or a haddock at my own.

But to my occupation. I said that I meant to catch human beings. Girding my loins, then, with the strength of an upright intention, and looking above for a blessing, I will at once enter on my calling as a fisherman. I mean to catch all my readers.

It will hardly answer my purpose to fish with a line and bait, hooking only one of you at a time. This will be too tedious an affair. I must use a drag-net, and thereby secure a heavy haul. Come, let me suppose that I have acquitted myself creditably, and that I have succeeded in entrapping any of you who are anywise afflicted in mind. What a heavy draught ! One word with you before I resume my occupation.

I must regard you, my afflicted friends, as among the heavily laden of the earth. You are walking in the shade, drooping as the bulrush, and perhaps sighing to yourselves, "I shall never again lift up my head. My burden is beyond my strength. The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmities ; but a wounded spirit who can bear?"

Your minds may be depressed on many accounts ; you may have desires without hope of attaining them, and fears which appear certain to be realized ; you may have spoken words that you cannot recall, and done deeds that cannot be undone ; you may be sorrowing for errors committed by yourselves or by others ; and dark as the present is, the future may be still darker to your view.

But, it may be, that your distress is of a yet deeper kind, that you really do think God has "forgotten to be gracious," that "his mercy is clean gone for ever," and that his promise has failed "for evermore." You may be sorrowing for sin, living without hope, and looking forward to "judgment and fiery indignation." A worse case than this, for discomfort, sorrow, and tribulation, can hardly be imagined ; but as the darkest night is succeeded by sunrise, so may your gloom be followed by gladness, and your shadows be dispersed by sunshine.

If I did not know that the High and Holy One can make a path through the sea, and a high road through the wilderness ; if I did not know, in one word, that what is hard, yea impossible to his creatures, is possible and easy to him, I should despair of many cases, and perhaps of yours among them ; but as it is, I am strong in hope, for “to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him,” Dan. ix. 9. Take your trouble, be it what it may, to the compassionate Redeemer. Cast your burden on him who hath said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” Matt. xi. 28. Do this humbly, heartily, perseveringly, and confidently, and you shall yet sing of mercy.

Having made the most of my first haul, and disentangled my meshes, let me now try what success will attend my second draught. There ! little cause have I to complain, for a heavy pull is required already. Judging by the weight of my net, it must be almost full : my toil seems well rewarded.

Let me imagine that I have this time secured all my readers who are afflicted in body. Here you are all collected together, and a sigh of unfeigned sympathy breaks from my very soul.

Some of you may be deformed in your frames,

having a short arm or leg, or a twisted body, or a rise on the shoulder, or you may be of very diminutive stature; though there are heavier trials, yet these, to many, are not very light. Some may have weak eyes, tender feet, or giddiness, or be much troubled with toothach, head-ach, indigestion, rheumatism, gout, or cramp in the limbs or stomach; while others may have been tried with a fractured limb, or may be afflicted with general debility, blood-spitting, jaundice, fever, dropsy, epilepsy, paralysis, or consumption. Of themselves these make a lengthened list,—and yet these are but a part of the infirmities allotted to humanity. A word with you on the subjects of your visitations.

If you are naturally deformed, you have a right to complain on this principle only, that your wisdom is greater than that of the all-wise Creator, who fashioned you according to his will. Unless you are quite sure that your wisdom is of this exalted kind, you had better be quiet and submissive. If pride whispers in your ear, that, on account of your infirmities, many people will disregard you, be as deaf as a post. A true naturalist is not apt to complain of the form of anything in creation, which is as God made it; and a true Christian would be ashamed of himself, and have just cause for shame too,

if he undervalued a fellow-heir of immortality merely because the Father of mercies had been less bountiful to him than to himself. Take courage, and bear up against your infirmity.

But if your trials are of the weightier kind to which I have alluded,—and believe me, I am not inclined to underrate them, nor to think lightly of them; if they are of the most afflictive character, even unto death,—still would I say, refuse not consolation. One man thinks that the sea separates distant countries from each other, but there are seafaring men who say that the ocean joins them. Now, this latter opinion, looking on the waters as a pathway for ships, is quite as correct, and a great deal more agreeable, than the former. Let us learn a lesson from the seafaring man, then, and regard the bright side of even our afflictions. Instead of considering sicknesses and diseases to be only so many painful visitations, let us try to regard them, also, as so many different roads to the golden gates of heaven. Take your trouble, be it what it may, to the compassionate Redeemer. Cast your burden on him who hath said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Do this humbly, heartily, perseveringly, and confidently, and you shall yet sing of mercy. You have read the words in the Revelation,

"These are they which came out of great tribulation," Rev. vii. 14 ; and if your afflictions should be so far sanctified as to lead you to the cross of the Redeemer, and to heaven, you will have abundant reason to rejoice that they ever came.

And now for the third and last effort with my drag-net. I thought that my former hauls were large, but the present one seems to be yet larger. If all were real fish that I have now caught, well might I boast of my success : but no ; they are only such of you as are afflicted in your estate, and to you individually I thus speak.

What ! has the "gold become dim," and the "most fine gold changed ?" Are your money-bags lighter than they were ? Have your riches in reality made "themselves wings" and fled away ? Is the snug estate mortgaged to its full worth ? Have you sold out what you had in the funds ? Do you no longer keep an account with a banker ? Is your dwelling-house smaller than it used to be ? And are your luxuries and comforts sensibly diminished ? These things are trying ; but if they are your heaviest trials, thank God with a grateful heart for your present position.

"Ay ! ay !" say you, "this is fine talking, but you know not the worst of it. Had my troubles come upon me through losses, and crosses, and unexpected misfortunes, I could have borne them

with the patience of a martyr : but it has been otherwise ; my own carelessness, if not my own folly, has reduced me ; for though I have never wilfully or willingly injured another, yet have I, thoughtlessly or through neglect, foolishly lost my property, and thereby not only shorn myself of my comforts, but injured also those who are about me. My trouble is not my deprivations alone, but the knowledge that I have brought them on myself."

I must frankly admit that this alters your case, and flings a darker cloud around you ; but there is a rainbow even in this shadowy and showery state of things, for your being so sensible of your own demerits is a sign with which I would not willingly part. Once more I say, Take your trouble, be what it may, to the compassionate Redeemer. Cast your burden on him who hath said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Do this humbly, heartily, perseveringly, and confidently, and you shall yet sing of mercy. Though you have lost much, you have not lost all ; though the feast has gone by, you may haply, even yet, fill up seven baskets with the fragments that remain ; for what with humility of mind, patience, acquiescence to the Divine will, watchfulness over yourself, increased diligence, a prayerful spirit,

and a grateful heart, you may be a wiser, a better, and a happier man than you were in the days of your prosperity. In the midst of your more limited means, and your less dainty bits and drops, you may have more true sunshine of soul than ever you had before. The Lord may lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and put gladness into your heart, more than in the time when your corn and wine increased.

If there be any of my readers who have escaped me; if my drag-net has let a few go by, who are neither troubled in mind, body, nor estate, (I apprehend there cannot be very many of this description,) to such I would say, Have a care of yourselves, for yours is no common case. Hardly do I know whether or not to congratulate you on your freedom from affliction. However, as it is not at all likely to last long, let me urge you to be thankful—morning, noon, and night—for the ease you enjoy, and also to prepare for trial; for “man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward,” Job. v. 7.

If you know anything of the occupation of a fisherman, you are aware that it cannot be carried on long together without weariness, and will, therefore, not be surprised if I now quietly walk away with my drag-net on my shoulder. You shall have, however, a parting admonition in the

words of the apostle Peter, who was, you know, an eminent fisherman: "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf;" and, "Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator," 1 Pet. iv. 16, 19.

A HOMELY CHAPTER.

IT is no uncommon affair for young people to measure themselves two or three times a year, and it would be no bad thing if we were all in the habit of measuring ourselves in after life ; not to see the height of our poor perishing bodies, but to know the state of our minds ; to find out whether, or not, we are growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This remark is capable of application by all ; at the present moment, it will be applied by me.

When stealing a glance at the many subjects on which my pen has been employed, and on the manner in which I have treated them, some fear is entertained by me, of having, at times, lost sight of that unaffected homeliness and simplicity with which I began my observations, and which I intended should characterize all that fell from my pen. I am quite inclined to believe, that the indulgence awarded me, and the kind manner in which I have been welcomed, has been mainly

owing to the plain, familiar, and friendly style I have adopted. My readers have felt at home: they have not been afraid of me; they have found me willing to learn as well as to teach; and, while I have faithfully pointed out their infirmities, I have not been backward in acknowledging my own.

This being the case, it behoves me, now and then, to look over my former productions; for I really am afraid that no single article of mine has appeared more likely to be useful, or more generally acceptable to my indulgent readers, than they were. This is rather a humiliating truth, and it makes me anxious to measure myself: to go back to years gone by, and see if, haply, I may not profit from the past, by comparing the stream with the fountain. Not willingly, as the furrows increase on my brow, would I decrease in usefulness, or decline in the estimation of my friends.

I have taken up my pen, on the present occasion, to write a plain and homely chapter, on the bodily afflictions of such of my fellow pilgrims as I meet with in my daily walks, thinking that this subject will come home to the hearts of others as well as to my own. Just at this time I feel more than ordinarily desirous of the attention of my poorer readers. I should rejoice to be a means of usefulness among the inhabitants of Hanover-

square; but I hope not less so to be popular in an almshouse.

In walking out yesterday, a sharp twinge or two of rheumatism in my shoulder, disposed me to sympathize with every one I saw that appeared to be at all afflicted.

The first man I met, seemingly out of health, was tall, and walked on slowly and carefully; I did not, however, pay much attention to him until he stopped to cough. Now stopping to cough is a simple expression, but it means a great deal. I often meet men of strong frame, whose cough denotes health rather than sickness; whose loud "hem!" proceeding from hearty lungs, rather courts attention, than seeks to avoid it; but when a man stops to cough, leaning one hand on his stick, and placing the other on his loins, it tells a tale; it says plainly that he is ailing, and that coughing and walking, at one and the same time, are more than he can well manage.

Well, as the tall man walked on, I observed how thin his legs were, how dependent he was on his stick, and how loosely his great coat hung on his slender frame. "Are you ready," said I to myself, "to be placed in the same circumstances? Hale and strong as you now feel yourself to be, the time is hastening on, when you must reasonably expect to become a little like him." Once

more the tall man stopped to cough, and my wish was, that as his flesh and heart were failing him, God might be the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever.

On turning into a square, I met a short fat gentleman, in a little carriage, which was drawn along the pavement by one servant in livery, and pushed along by another. When I looked at the handsome livery of the servants, I thought the gentleman must be rich ; but when I regarded his face, I knew him to be poor ; he had no health, no intellect, no enjoyment. This sad state of things was too plainly told to be misunderstood. Had a hard-working labourer been present, he might have thanked God for his tough crust and pallet of straw. I was present, and I walked on, more thankful than ever for my numberless mercies, thinking within my heart, that a healthful body and a grateful spirit were worth more than all the riches and all the livery-servants in the world.

The next afflicted person that attracted my attention was a Jew, with an old clothes-bag on his back : he was in years, his nose large, his low forehead covered with deep wrinkles, while a long beard descended from his chin. If the clothes in his bag were no better than those on his back, they were worth but little. Neither his face, nor his clothes, nor his bag, however, caught my

attention so much as his infirmity. One of his legs was so terribly swollen that he could scarcely drag it along. I regarded him with pity, though low cunning was visible in his quick-glancing eye.

I thought of Moses, the lawgiver, and of Aaron, arrayed in his brave apparel. I thought of the goodly glory of Solomon's temple, and then of the fallen state of the people of God, when they were carried away captive, and those who carried them away captive required of them a song; and then came the remembrance of the touching reply, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Psa. cxxxvii. 4. So vividly did the picture come before me of the ancient Jews, hanging their harps on the willows, and sitting down to weep by the rivers of Babylon, that I could, almost, have lifted up my voice and wept. Neither the dirty wretchedness, nor the low cunning of the old Jew, prevented me from regarding him with strong sympathy and compassion. I longed to heal his infirmity, to array him in braver garments; to take away the blindness that has fallen on Israel, and to hear him cry out to the Saviour, with Thomas of old, "My Lord and my God!" John xx. 28.

A pale-faced woman, neatly clad, hobbling along on a pair of crutches, heaved a sigh as I passed her, that seemed to come from her soul. Though

I knew not her ailment, seeing that she was a daughter of affliction, I commended her to Him who can make the halt strong of foot, and the cripple to run like the roe.

He who walks abroad in quest of bodily infirmity, will not go far without accomplishing his errand. A day-labourer was borne past me, lying at full-length on a door, which rested on the shoulders of four of his fellow workmen. He had fallen from a scaffold ; and one of the accompanying throng told me that some of the poor fellow's bones were broken. A great coat had been thrown over him, so that I saw not his face. If kindly feelings and unaffected sorrow could have set his fractured limbs, he would have had no need to have entered the hospital.

A young man with a short leg, lengthened out by a kind of patten, and a taller figure, with an empty sleeve pinned across his breast, came in sight nearly together. With kindly interest did I regard them both, while I felt grateful for my hands and my feet.

Many ailing people passed me, but my eye lighted on one apparently in perfect health. He was a big-breasted man, of a powerful frame. His look was confidence, and his stride was strength, but he had a wooden leg. I thought of what he must have passed through. What occasioned the

loss of his leg I know not ; perhaps a bold attack on the field of battle, or a fall from his hunter in a desperate fox-chase ; for he was certainly not a man to take things by halves, nor to be intimidated by common danger. Had he known that I pitied him, perhaps he would have despised me, for he evidently pitied not himself. There was a rampant resolution in his countenance, a defiance of fear, a demeanour which, put into words, would be these : “I have lost my leg, but am still unsubdued ; and had I a dozen legs, and were to lose them all, my spirit would remain unbroken.” He strode past me with a bustling gait, as one proud of his power, and prodigal of his resolution, and I looked after him with pity.

But why did I pity him ? why, for those very qualities on account of which he valued himself ; for the great strength of his giant body, and the dauntless resolution of his mind. “How much of suffering and trial,” thought I, “will be required to pull down that strong-knit iron frame, and that lofty spirit !” I have seen a huge and strengthy horse struggling in the death grapple, and marvelled at his desperate energy. But I will pursue the metaphor no further. We are all in God’s hands, for life and death ; and whether we are strong as Samson, or weak as infancy ; high-minded as Belshazzar, or meek as Moses ;

he will deal with us according to his good pleasure.

As I turned the corner of a broad street, I well nigh stumbled against a little slender man, and was quite disposed to consider that the fault lay with him, as he did not give way an inch at my approach ; but we are too often hasty in our judgments. A glance at his green shade set me right, for I then perceived it was his infirmity rather than his fault, for his sight was too imperfect to enable him to see distinctly the impediments in his path, or the people that were passing by him. His tread was uncertain, and he rather groped his way, by the aid of his stick, than pursued it directed by his eyes. How much do our infirmities bind us to our fellow-pilgrims, who are afflicted in the same way as ourselves ! Having weakened my own eyes, by reading small print in my youth, a sad fault, and by poring over books late at night in my age, a fault yet greater, I have need, in my studious hours, of all the assistance that spectacles and green shades can afford me. No wonder, then, that I regarded the little slender man with commiseration. Eyesight is a precious sense ; the diamonds of the earth are as dust to it. Close your eyelids for an instant, and try to fancy that you are never to open them again, and you will

gaze around you afterward with delight, and, I hope, with thankfulness, also.

I was standing still, and watching the movements of the green-shaded passenger, when a short, thick-set man came waddling along, with slits cut along the sides of his shoes. How softly did he move, and how carefully did he put down his poor feet to the ground. It would manifest but little shrewdness on my part, were I to suspect that he had both corns and bunions; for the case was so plain, that to have doubted it would have been a libel on my powers of perception and understanding. If molehills did not literally become mountains to the tender-footed pedestrian, at least it may be asserted, with truth, that a very small stone was to him a source of very great annoyance. On he went, as I stood still, waddling, limping, and treading tenderly, according to the smoothness or roughness of his path.

You must not suppose that these cases of bodily infirmity came before me one after another, treading, as it were, on each other's heels. No; it was in the course of a walk of some length, that I observed them among many others; and at this moment I feel more thankful for sound lungs, tolerably good sight, and the use of my limbs, than if I had not made

these homely comments on my afflicted friends. How is it with you? Are you hale and upright, or ailing, infirm, and afflicted, in mind, body, or estate? We are sure to be tried at one time or another. Oh, let us take our infirmities, of whatever kind they are, to the great Physician: for he who cured Naaman of his leprosy, can assuredly make us whole, or cause patience to have "its perfect work," if suffering be continued.

ON THE COMMON SAYING,
“I QUITE FORGOT IT.”

A GOOD friend of mine, who has helped my pen to many a subject, is in the habit of adding to his communications the words, “Try what you can make of this, if the subject bites ;” meaning that if the topic should lay hold of me, moving me to write energetically, I should at once enter upon it, and not otherwise.

It may be that you have seen a bear dragged to a stake to be baited, a lively exhibition of unwillingness ; and regarded a greyhound in the slips “straining for the start,” an equally vivid illustration of eagerness ; and if so, I need not bring forward any other figures whereby to set forth the striking difference between disinclination and desire. I like a subject to bite before I enter on it : I love, when it is before me, to feel as “standing in the slips,” and not as being “dragged to the stake.”

It is, then, for the reason just stated, and because I feel much interested in the subject, that I now make a few remarks on the common saying, “I quite forgot it.” If my present emotions are stifled, I may never have any of the same kind equally energetic. I will at once commence my observations.

A correspondent, who appears to be all alive to the importance of this subject, writes to me thus:—“I am a shopkeeper, with two shopmen and a son behind the counter; I have also a maid-servant and a housekeeper, besides a family of five children. I say to James, ‘Have you done so and so?’ ‘No, sir, I quite forgot it,’ is the reply. ‘Charles, have you been on that errand?’ ‘No, sir, I quite forgot it.’ William, have you taken that letter to the post?” ‘No, sir, I quite forgot it.’ ‘Susan, have you sent to the shop for that article I wished you to get?’ ‘No, sir.’ ‘Why have you not?’ ‘Because, sir, I quite forgot it.’ ‘Ann, did you call at Mr. Thompson’s, and tell him I should not be able to meet him to-day as I proposed?’ ‘No, sir, I quite forgot it.’ Servants and children, as well as masters, are very forgetful; and the reply, ‘Oh, I quite forgot it,’ comes so readily, and so frequently, that I determined to drop a note to Old Humphrey to draw his attention to it, that

he might give us a chapter on the subject of forgetfulness, or from the words, ‘ I quite forgot it ; ’ thinking that it might arouse the memory of some who quite forget, not only to such things of this world as they ought to remember, but to those also of the world to come.”

Now, there is such an apparent singleness of purpose, such an honesty of intention, and withal so much that may be made practically useful in the remarks of my correspondent, that I am quite inclined to add to them a few brief observations, with the hope that, together, they may induce some to remember what now they are too much in the habit of forgetting. It occurs to me that my pen has scribbled a few lines on this subject before, but of this I am not quite certain.

On the first view of the case, it seems hard to blame any one for a defective memory. Are we not all in the habit of forgetting things, in spite of our best resolutions to remember them ? Can we forget half of what we would willingly bury in oblivion ? or remember half of those things which we desire to be ever present to our recollection ? A bad memory surely is an affliction heavy enough of itself, without reproach being added to the burden.

I am afraid, however, that this kind of reason-

ing, though it serves our purpose excellently in apologizing for ourselves, is far from being satisfactory when offered to us as an excuse for others. When we have neglected to deliver an important letter, we may be satisfied in making the observation, “It was an oversight of mine, I quite forgot it ;” but when any one neglects to deliver an important letter or communication to us, and offers us such an unsatisfactory apology, what heart-burnings, what uncharitable thoughts, and what bitter words does it not frequently occasion !

You must allow me to strip the phrase, “I quite forgot it,” of all the false reasoning that is usually attached to it, and to show it up in all its naked deformity. I admit, though a bad memory may often be made better by judicious and persevering effort, that it is, sometimes, an infirmity, and that those who have a bad memory, and cannot help it, are not fit objects of censure ; but I do not admit that a bad memory is the cause of, or has, of necessity, anything to do with, the frequent observation, “I quite forgot it.”

If I am told that a man, whom I am in the habit of seeing with a sack of flour on his back, is very weak in his body, or that another, whom I frequently meet walking at the rate of four or five miles an hour, can hardly creep along, I do not believe what is said of them. It may suit

the purpose of the one to be thought weak in body, and of the other to be considered almost incapable of walking ; but I have positive proof that the contrary is the fact. Is not this clear ? Can we arrive at any other conclusion ? I think not.

But what has this to do, say you, with the matter ? How do you apply this reasoning to the case of those who are in the habit of saying, " I quite forgot it ?" In this manner. If I observe that such as most frequently excuse themselves on account of a bad memory, in things in which others are interested, have no deficiency of memory in things in which they themselves have an advantage, I am as much justified in asserting the strength of their memory, as I am in declaring the man who carried the sack of flour to be a strong man, and he who walked at the rate of four or five miles an hour to be a fast walker.

We now, then, come to the root of the matter, and must perceive that though this habit of quite forgetting things, appears to spring from the want of a good memory, it really arises from the want of a good principle. This may sound harshly in the ears of some of my readers ; but as I would apply it to myself as freely as to others, I must be at liberty to repeat my observation, that the habit of excusing a neglect of duty by the remark,

“ I quite forgot it,” is much more to be attributed to a deficiency of principle than to a deficiency of memory.

If the same “Charles,” who quite forgot to go on the errand of his master, is in the habit of forgetting to go on his own errands ; if the same “William,” who quite forgot to take the letter to the post, is in the habit of forgetting to post his own letters ; and if the identical “Susan,” who quite forgot to go to the shop for the article wanted, is very much accustomed to forget to go shopping herself, when she requires, or thinks she requires, a new cap, or bonnet, or fresh ribands, why then, I shall be quite disposed to admit the plea of a bad memory ; but if, on the contrary, they never do forget these things, then am I compelled to ascribe their errors to a defective principle, and not to a defective memory.

“I quite forgot it.” Indeed ! I have no patience with such an idle excuse. Where things which ought to be remembered are forgotten once through a bad memory, they are forgotten half a dozen times for want of a disposition to do to others as we would have them do to us.

One or two questions would I fain put to those who are in the habit of neglecting a duty, and of apologizing for it with the pitiful excuse, “I quite forgot it.” Do you *try* to remember it ? No

doubt, when a thing has been important to yourselves, to your pleasure, or your profit, you have, before now, made a memorandum of it ; or asked those around you to remind you of it. You have tied a knot in your pocket-handkerchief, or fastened a riband round your wrist, or a thread round your finger ; and resorted to other contrivances to assist your memory. Now, are you in the habit of doing the same things to assist you in the discharge of those duties which you so frequently quite forget. Be honest to yourselves in replying to these questions.

My readers must remember that this hackneyed phrase, "I quite forgot it," is not confined to any class of people or grade of life. The child and the parent, the husband and the wife, the master and the man, the mistress and the maid, where conscience is not lively, and where principle sleeps, are too much accustomed to bring it into daily use.

I knew a kind-hearted husband whose services, he being in a public situation, were required to be rendered with great exactness in regard to time, so that it was absolutely necessary to his comfort and peace that his meals should be prepared with great punctuality. His wife knew this, and yet it was a rare thing for the good man to sit down to his dinner at the appointed time. His wife was

from home, or very busy, or prevented from attending to it, or one thing or other, but generally the ready excuse that reached the husband's ears was this, “I quite forgot it.” Constant dropping wears away stone, and continued neglect will diminish the truest affection. No wonder that his temper was soured, and his love changed into severity. The good man died, leaving his widow, among other things, the unwelcome remembrance that for years, by a culpable inattention to his comfort, she had robbed him of his peace, and filled up his cup of bitterness to the brim.

I knew a son, who, when at a distance from an afflicted mother, always forgot to write to her, when a letter would have given her comfort, and always remembered to write when he wished her to supply him with the means of extravagance. Was this, think you, a proof of a bad memory, or of a bad heart?

But I need not multiply instances to prove that the common-place saying, “I quite forgot it,” is, in general, nothing more than the poor, thin, flimsy, transparent veil with which we try to hide our neglect of duty; and that whether we are, or are not, we ought to be, altogether ashamed of it. If we forget either what we owe to our heavenly Father, for the yearly, daily, and hourly manifestations of his goodness, or

what is due to our fellow beings of all classes around us, a time is coming when we shall have too much cause to remember it. Let, then, fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, masters and men, mistresses and maids, with old Humphrey and all his readers, looking upwards for help, determine together, from this time henceforward, to have nothing at all to do with the sentence, "I quite forgot it;" not doubting that this resolve will improve our memory, our integrity, our affection, and our peace.

ON THE FOOTMARKS IN THE SLOUGH.

If I were to give an account of half the scrapes that I get into, many a hearty laugh would be indulged in at my expense. An old man appears absolutely ridiculous, in many situations, wherein a young one would hardly excite attention. The other day, in attempting to go the nearest road to a cottage, I got so completely set in a clayey slough, that I could not, for a season, stir backwards or forwards. There I stood, waving my hand in the air, to keep my balance, my right foot bedded up to my ankle in the clinging clay; while the other was only uplifted for a moment, afterwards to plunge to a deeper depth. Down went my foot, and up squirted the muddy water over my clean lambs'-wool stockings, as unerringly as if a well-aimed squib had been purposely directed against my legs. I certainly did cut a most deplorable figure.

It is well for me that, in such circumstances, I

can generally extract amusement from my calamity ; and, what is yet better, the merriment of my heart is frequently followed by a profitable reflection ; it was thus with me in the case alluded to. Most likely I should have backed out of the bog, and given up my visit to the cottage, had not some footmarks, in the clayey slough, caught my attention ; these plainly told me, that, bad as the place was, travellers had found their way through it. I took courage at the thought. “There are ‘footmarks in the slough,’ ” said I ; “somebody has been here before me.”

Christian reader, if thou art in the right way to heaven, it is likely enough that thou art passing through “much tribulation ;” now look well at thy condition, however sad it may appear, and see if thou canst not take comfort that there are “footmarks in the slough.”

Is thine a trying condition ? Art thou knocking at mercy’s gate to obtain forgiveness of sins, and the hope of everlasting life, and does it not yet appear to be opened ? Thine is a sorrowful condition, but keep up thy courage. There are “footmarks in the slough,” ay, in the very slough in which thy feet are sticking. The Canaanitish woman passed along the same way, and was as fast set, for a time, as thou art ; but mark how gloriously she came out of it. “O woman, great

is thy faith : be it unto thee even as thou wilt !”
Matt. xv. 28.

Art thou in a tempted condition, urged on by a vigilant enemy to commit sin ? There are “ footmarks in the slough.” Mark well how Joseph escaped out of this place ; keep close to his footsteps, and thou shalt escape too. “ How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ? ” Gen. xxxix. 9.

Art thou in a backsliding condition, ready to give up all, because thou hast departed from the right way ? There are “ footmarks in the slough.” Royal footmarks are before thee ; the man after God’s own heart came here, and bitter were his lamentations ; yet he recovered his footing, and was restored unto favour : for “ if we confess our sins,” God “ is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,” 1 John i. 9.

Art thou in a rebellious condition ? Is thy heart cavilling with, and replying to the Lord, under the mysterious dispensations of his providence ? There are “ footmarks in the slough.” Jonah floundered here till he got weary of his life, and thought that he did “ well to be angry,” even unto death. Humble thyself under the mighty hand of God ; and the Lord who spared Nineveh and Jonah, also, will deal as gently with

thee ; for “ he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness,” Neh. ix. 17.

Art thou in a benighted condition ? Hast thou no light to see the road before thee ? Have neither sun, moon, nor stars appeared for many days ? There are “ footmarks in the slough.” Behold the footmarks of the patriarch Abram, who travelled here ; when called by God to go forth out of his country, and he journeyed, “ not knowing whither he went ! ” Notwithstanding the horror of great darkness that fell upon him in this place, “ to the land of Canaan he went forth, and to the land of Canaan he came.” “ Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light ? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God,” Isa. l. 10.

Art thou in a persecuted and despised condition, suffering shame and reproach for thy Leader and Lord ? There are “ footmarks in the slough.” I should marvel if thou couldest tell me of a saint on earth, or in heaven, who has altogether escaped this place. Nay ! Moses even turned out of a smooth path to wade through this quagmire, preferring it to the pleasant paths and broad high roads of the land of Egypt. Here are the crimson footprints of those who suffered even to the death ; “ not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.” It was

in this spot that John the Baptist was beheaded. Here Paul was stoned, and left for dead. Here Stephen cried out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The noble army of martyrs perished here ; and I cannot promise thee a clear escape from it, any more than thy brethren ; but I know that he will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, who has said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," Rev. ii. 10.

Art thou in a suffering condition, afflicted in mind, body, and estate ; eating thy bread in bitterness, watering thy couch with tears ? There are "footmarks in the slough." Observe how deep Job sank in this place, yet he came out again, and found a better road than he had ever known before. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Art thou in a desolate condition ? Alone, destitute, forsaken ? Is "lover and friend put far from thee, and thine acquaintance into darkness ?" There are "footmarks in the slough." Hagar and Elijah laid themselves down in despair in this place ; but God appeared for them when they cried to him. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee," Isa. xlix. 15.

Art thou in a desponding condition, and dost thou envy the ungodly? Art thou ready to faint in the furnace, and cry, It goes well with the wicked? There are "footmarks in the slough." David's foot "had well nigh slipped" here. Good old Jacob was tried hard here, and began to think his grey hairs would go down in sorrow to the grave. "All these things," said he, "are against me." But he had good reason to alter his mind after that, and see things in a very different light. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths," Prov. iii. 5, 6.

Art thou in a dying condition? There are "footmarks in the slough"—footmarks in the dark valley! Thousands, who cried out in this place that they should sink to rise no more, are now casting their crowns before the throne of God, and singing everlasting praises to the Redeemer, who lifted them out of the terrors of death, and gave them victory over the grave.

Take courage, then, Christian reader, and be assured, there shall no temptation befall thee, but such as is common to man. However sad thy condition, somebody has been in it before thee. There are "footmarks in the slough."

OLD HUMPHREY OUT OF HIS DEPTH.

IN my time I have been a bold swimmer, striking out fearlessly in the pond, brook, or river, as the case might be. I have plunged headlong from the high bank, bottomed the deepest part of the water, remained long beneath the surface, and re-appeared far from the point where I took my leap. I have played most of the pranks that good swimmers delight in ; and once on a summer's day—not willingly would I part with the grateful remembrance of the achievement—I fished up from the bottom of the troubled waters a drowning fellow-creature, and was thus made a means in the hands of God of saving human life.

You may think, perhaps, and I fear with too much reason, that I am speaking proudly. Oh, the pride and the folly of an old man's heart ! Every year, every day, and I had almost said every hour, do I increasingly feel how much the good opinion of my friends is owing to their own kind-heartedness, and to their ignorance of my manifold infirmities :—but to my subject. Once,

before I could swim, I got out of my depth, and had not timely assistance been at hand, the observations I am now making had never been written down. It was in the deep water that I got out of my depth in the case to which I have alluded, but often and often, since then, have I got out of my depth in very different situations.

There is much diffidence necessary in the thought, word, and deed of a man when thinking, speaking, or acting under circumstances that are new to him. He who has never pondered on the subject of the poor laws, should not be severe on the conclusions of those who have. He who has never been at sea should be a little chary of his nautical terms; and the man who is not accustomed to the whip and the reins had better not attempt to drive four in hand in Cheapside.

Now, though these observations are very reasonable, and of a kind calculated to impress the reader of them in favour of the wisdom of the writer: yet, with shame I confess that I am not entitled to unconditional confidence. In other words, it by no means follows that, because I can lay down an excellent rule for another, I always rigidly observe it myself.

Though usually on my guard against the assumption of knowing that of which I am ignorant, and always desirous to keep my standing in

a creditable manner, yet it has, occasionally, happened that I have ventured out of my depth in troubled waters, and been taken off my legs. It may be that you may laugh if I give you an illustration, but that will not hinder me from pursuing my design.

Some time ago, in conversation with a stranger, I made some remarks on the currency, one of the many subjects on which I am profoundly ignorant. The stranger appeared to assent to my observation, and led me onwards very amicably, gradually growing deeper and deeper in his remarks, till my situation became very critical. Willingly would I have drawn back, but this he would by no means allow; on he dragged and pushed me, whether I would or not, till he got me quite out of my depth, and then gave me as complete a ducking as ever I had in my life. The man understood the subject thoroughly: he was altogether master of it, and showed me no mercy. When, at last, I succeeded in getting out of his clutches—and this I did not do very easily—I made up my mind either to obtain a little more knowledge on the subject, or never again to converse on the currency. Have you ever met with anything like this in your own experience? If you have, hardly need I say, Keep within your depth! my friends, keep within your depth!

On another occasion—and I rather think that I have somewhere adverted to the circumstance before—when in company with one who looked like a farmer, I rated my own powers of conversation rather too high and his somewhat too low, so much so, that it was with great unwillingness I entered into conversation with one to whom I thought I could impart so much, and from whom I expected to derive so little. True it is, that the farmer-like man began with pigs and barley-flour, turnips and the price of grain, but he did not end there. On he went, taking me with him, talking of the produce of the land, of population, of mining operations, of human labour, of machinery, of the resources of the country, of exports and imports, of political economy and government, till I was not only out of my depth, but absolutely over head and ears in trouble. Why, the man was one of our great capitalists, and was on his way to the members of the privy council, with his papers in his pocket. I could have hid my face in my hat. If I was proud when we began to talk, I was humble enough when we left off. What he thought of me I know not, but I well know that I thought myself to be a great simpleton. A little humility is better than a great deal of pride.

There are, however, graver subjects than these,

on which I sometimes foolishly ponder—subjects that are too deep for me to comprehend. Only an hour ago, I was thinking of sin and sorrow, and wondered that both should so much abound in a world created and peopled by One infinitely wise, and good, and holy. The murdering Cains, the betraying Judases, the hard-hearted Pharaohs, the haughty Belshazzars, the deceitful Delilahs came before me, with all the evil inclinations of my own sinful heart. There came, too, the afflicted Jobs, the bereaved Rachels, the mourning Jeremias, the deaf and dumb, the blind and the lame, with all the bodily pains and mental agonies of those who consume the night with their groaning, and water their couch with their tears. I thought—I pondered in vain. I was out of my depth, and could not comprehend the mystery that engaged my reflections. The subject was too deep for me; it absolutely overwhelmed me. “Be thankful for thy mercies,” said I, giving up the point, “and leave the miseries of mankind to Him whose ‘way is in the sea,’ whose ‘path is in the great waters,’ and whose ‘footsteps are not known.’ Fear him, love him, obey him, and glorify him; and what thou knowest not now, haply, thou mayest know hereafter.”

Often and often do I get out of my depth,

when reflecting on the evils that abound. I allude not here to sin, nor to the sorrow that springs obviously from sin, but to such evils as the plague, the famine, the wild tornado, the devastating torrent, the devouring flood, and the exterminating volcano. The crooked-billed eagle tearing the lamb, the lion rending the antelope, and the scaly monsters of the deep preying on their kind, are mysteries that I cannot unravel. You tell me that man's transgression has occasioned them, and that the Most High overrules them for good. I hear you, but you make the matter no plainer. Mysteries they are, and mysteries they are meant to be; intended, no doubt, among other designs of Him who does all things well, to baffle the wisdom and to humble the pride of his creatures. I am out of my depth when I think of these things, and am glad to exclaim, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Rom. xi. 33. And hence, also, I learn a lesson of humble adoration: "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." Rom. xi. 36.

I have, at times, lost myself in thinking of the Almighty Creator and Preserver of mankind, and have been reproved by the solemn inquiry:

"Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Job xi. 7. I have been, too, sadly out of my depth in thinking on eternity, on the unnumbered orbs of heaven, and on God's intelligent creatures, as well as on the myriads of animals, the myriads and myriads of the finny and the feathered race, and the myriads and myriads and myriads of the insect world; living, eating, acting, enjoying, and suffering; all made by one Almighty Being, infinite and incomprehensible! How wise it is to keep within our depth! Oh that I could be more simple-minded on such subjects! Oh that I could with truth say, "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me," Ps. cxxxii. 1.

I might allude to many other subjects, but there is one on which I love to find myself out of my depth—the inimitable love, and mercy, and goodness of God. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. If, like me, you are given to speculate on things that you cannot comprehend, here is a subject that will suit us both, for it is altogether unfathomable. Here may we be bewildered without injury, nay, get

out of our depth and lose ourselves with advantage. • May this subject, then, be more frequently in your minds, and increasingly occupy the heart, the intellect, and affections of Old Humphrey !

ON PECULIARITIES AND PREDILECTIONS.

WHAT a strange and unaccountable creature is man in his predilections and prejudices : now voluntarily pursuing real drudgery as a pastime ; and now shrinking beneath a light visitation, as though the weight of the world were on his shoulders !

I am fond of noticing the different tastes that men manifest in their hours of leisure ; for these are often, as much opposed as they well can be to the business and profession they follow. You have observed this, no doubt, as well as I have.

I have known a banker, well versed in the mystery of angling, making his own rods, plaiting his own lines, forming his own floats and artificial flies, and sitting, hour after hour, for the luxury of a “bite” or a “nibble” from the fish in his own brook or pond ;—a baker, manifesting a strong taste for architecture, rivalling and surpassing educated architects in the style and

beauty of its pillars, pilasters, and pediments, his entablatures, cornices, and capitals ;—a builder, fond of black-letter books, seeking with avidity for illuminated missals, and bidding almost any price for a real Caxton ;—a barrister, an industrious collector of insects, running after yellow moths, pursuing, helter-skelter, the green dragon-fly, and lying in wait by the hour, with flapper in hand, to surprise an emperor of Morocco ;—a mercer, leaving his silks and his satins to cultivate land, dressing himself in coarse clothes and thick-soled shoes, introducing patent drills and improved clod-crushers, and changing the “Times” newspaper for the “Farmers’ Journal ;”—a grocer, deeply skilled in horse flesh, colts, aged and three-years-old, bay mares and grey geldings, and knowing how to treat them for the grease and the glanders, the poll-evil, the spavin, and the staggers ;—a cutler, profoundly versed in botany, quite at home among monandria, diandria, triandria and all other classes, and monogynia, digynia, trigynia and all other orders, discoursing freely on calyxes, corallas, stamens, pistils, pericarps and receptacles ;—and a brass founder, indulging in his love of paintings, always visiting picture galleries, attending public auctions, rummaging in brokers’ shops, and ever on the eve of buying or selling a Van-

dyke, a Poussin, a Cuyp, a Wilkie, a Landseer, or a Turner.

The same thing may be observed of men in conversation. Affected by some influential circumstance, they show what is uppermost in the mind: thus, one who has lately attended a lecture on mesmerism, indulges his friends very liberally with his notions of manipulations, somnolency, somnambulism, and clairvoyance. A second, a warm supporter of "singing for the million," has his mouth full of crotchets and quavers, Exeter Hall, harmony, Handel, and Hullah. While another, whose son has been a lieutenant in the Chinese expedition, can talk of nothing but the taking of Chin-kiang-foo, the twenty-one millions of dollars paid to the British, and the five free-trade ports of Canton, Amoy, Foo-chow-foo, Ningpo, and Shang-hae.

These remarks will, very likely, set you thinking of your own peculiarities; but however that may be, I have alluded to them, in some degree, as an introduction to my own. Many are my odd whims and fancies; but perhaps I have a stronger predilection, in my leisure hours, to walk abroad and observe persons and things than for any other pursuit. I notice the countenances of those I meet, ponder their actions, and pick up their passing remarks.

If I go near a seed shop, where flowers and plants are exhibited in the window, I am sure to step aside to admire them, repeating, perhaps, to myself, as I depart, “What gifts are these of the goodness of our heavenly Father? ‘If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?’” Matt. vi. 30. If I see a sparrow, from the house-top, wing his way to the court-yard below, I marvel at the ease and lightness with which he does that which man cannot perform. “The sparrow is a common bird,” I say to myself, “but what a gift has God given him in those fluttering wings that bear him through the yielding air;” and then comes the text, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows,” Matt. x. 29—31. In this manner, trifles afford me pleasure, so that, oftentimes, in the course of a single day, my gratification is not only abundant, but also, of a very varied character.

As I walked out yesterday, a heavily laden porter went past me with a load on his head and shoulders, which seemed better suited for a camel

than for a man. As I walked behind him, I admired the sturdiness and steadiness with which he carried his load. His body and limbs were clothed with strength, and he, apparently, made light of that which would have overwhelmed me. "I hope," said I, whispering to myself, "he is grateful to his Maker. Why, in the property of bodily strength, this man is worth half a dozen Old Humphreys."

An ox, of a most gigantic size, was being driven slowly along the road : from his huge limbs and prodigious bulk, I suspected that the enormous animal had come from the cattle show. So broad and level was the creature's back, that a boy might, almost, have played at ring-taw upon it. Two streams of hot breath rushed from his nostrils, and the care with which he picked the softest part of the road told me that he was foot-sore. At times he looked sullen, and glared around, as if half disposed to make a run at a passenger ; but this was out of the question, for he was not formed for running, being, as it were, anchored to the ground by his own weight. With a fair start I could have beaten the unwieldy brute myself at that exercise. While marvelling for a moment at, to me, the unsightly mass of living flesh, I observed a butcher gazing on the bulky beast with evident admiration. "Oh,"

thought I, “we have all our predilections, and a butcher is as much entitled to gratification as I am. While other objects are affording me satisfaction, many a better man, perhaps, in the shape of an honest farmer, is reaping as large a harvest of pleasure from the sight of a Durham ox, a Herefordshire heifer, a Leicestershire sheep, or a Northamptonshire prize pig.”

In the afternoon of yesterday, a blind man came towards me, as I walked along the street, and I could not but remark, what indeed I have often observed, that strange union of boldness and fear visible in the face of the blind. A blind man seems to set his face as a flint against danger, and yet carries his head in a position to start back instantly, should he come in unpleasant contact with person or thing. He makes manifest an equal desire and ability to go on and to draw back, as circumstances may require. It is not improbable that you have observed the same thing. Habit gives him courage to advance, and experience points out the necessity of being prepared to recede. So long as we are blessed with sight, so long shall we have a proof of God’s goodness, that ought continually to call forth sympathy for the afflicted as well as our gratitude and praise.

To-day I was in the neighbourhood of Regent’s

Park, when a young man elegantly dressed, with light kid gloves on his hands, passed on before me, mounted on a spirited grey horse, a noble animal. A glance at the rider would have told one much less accustomed to read humanity than I am, that he had not fallen into the error of estimating himself or his horse too lowly.

The rider had, evidently, in view two objects somewhat opposed to each other. One was to show off his steed by making him caper, and the other to sit gracefully and perfectly at ease in the saddle. His dexter hand was placed on his thigh, and with the weaker one he negligently held the white reins, just as he came to a dirty part of the street, where two ladies and a baker's man were passing. Whether it was in consequence of any private prompting, I cannot tell, but, suddenly, the horse made a spring, which fairly unseated the rider, making him fain to lay hold of his horse's neck to keep himself from the ground, and also splashed from head to foot the two ladies and baker's man. While the unfortunate equestrian was reinstating himself again in his saddle, he had to endure the gibes of the baker's man, who bawled out to him to turn back and beg the ladies' pardon.

This reminded me of an affair of my own, when I was a younger man than I now am. Being on

horseback in the country, I had put myself into an excellent attitude on the approach of an open carriage filled with company, when, very provokingly, my steed took fright ; off went my hat, to the diversion of the carriage company, and off, too, went Humphrey in a gallop, in such an un-horsemanlike position that a cavalry corporal would have been ashamed of him. Pride is pride in the town and in the country, and is as un-lovely in the one as in the other. Both Humphrey and he of the kid gloves were rightly served. "When pride cometh, then cometh shame : but with the lowly is wisdom," Prov. xi. 2.

As I passed on, a child fell down, slipping off the edge of the pavement into the dirt. I made the best of my way to pick up the poor thing out of the mire ; but when had man the readiness of woman in doing a deed of kindness ? Before I had reached the spot, a comfortable, motherly-looking creature, in a plaid shawl, had done what I intended to do, and in a much better manner than I could have performed it. Man may boast of his intellect as much as he will ; but woman goes a-head of him in kind-heartedness and affection. While he rejoices with them that rejoice, she will weep with them that weep.

On turning the corner of a street into a square,

I came upon a man with a barrel-organ, and a fine one it was. He was playing the tune of the old hundredth psalm. "Oh," thought I, repeating the first verse of the psalm, "here is an invitation in which we ought all to join.

' All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice ;
Him serve with fear, his praise forth tell,
Come ye before him, and rejoice.' "

It is not necessary to my enjoyment, when I hear music, that it should be performed in an orchestra, and emanate from costly instruments and celebrated performers. Sometimes the song of the lark, and sometimes the lay of the linnet, will set me off at once with melody in my heart, if not on my tongue, to sing a song of thanksgiving. I was just in a mood of the kind when the strains of the barrel-organ reached me, and when I left the square at the opposite angle, I was chanting, in an under tone, the words—

" Ye know the Lord our God is good ;
His mercy is for ever sure ;
His truth at all times firmly stood,
And shall from age to age endure."

ON RACING.

You will hardly expect, notwithstanding the title of my present paper, to obtain much information from me about Ascot, Epsom, or Newmarket. If at present you know but little about the affairs of the "Turf," my remarks are not likely to add much to your slender stock of information. He who has aught of ambition to be classed among "the knowing ones," must qualify himself under a much more able instructor than he would find in Old Humphrey.

In my youthful days I was swift of foot, and few, of my own age, among my playmates, could pass me in the race. My schoolfellows gave me the name of "Greyhound" for my speed, and that of "Squirrel" for my skill in climbing. It is not, however, to boast of my victories, but rather to acknowledge my defeats, that I have now taken up my pen.

I do not remember to have enumerated, in the long list of my infirmities, the error of putting off to the last moment necessary duties, and yet this

is an error which, to my shame be it spoken, has subjected me to much inconvenience. Often and often do I delay till the morrow, what should be done to-day ; and continually do I find myself engaged in fanciful projects referring to future times, when I ought to be occupied in those things which demand immediate attention.

To speak in the mildest language, it is unwise not to secure those objects which have the first claim upon us, and equally so to defer to the last moment a duty that must needs be performed. He who allows himself but five minutes to put a letter in the post, merely because he can walk the distance in the time, is inconvenienced by the loss of a moment—he is all hurry, turbulence, and confusion, and is very likely, by some unexpected hindrance, to be too late ; whereas, if he allows himself ten minutes, he runs no risk, but secures his object with ease, tranquillity, and good humour.

Continually am I racing against old father Time, and continually is the stalworth old boy too much for me ; he is too long in the stride, excellent in his breath—and then, look at his huge, long wings ! As for stopping a moment, he never thinks of it. On he goes, turning aside for nothing, making way at a fearful rate, never looking behind him, and keeping up the same pace

to the end of his course. Somehow or other he always gets the start ; and though, now and then, I come up with him, I never can pass him. With all these advantages he adds another—he tries me hard at the beginning of the race, whereas I am too apt to depend on beating him at the last push. Again I say, Old Hourglass is too much for me.

Many a hard turn have I had with Time ; but whether it has been up hill or down, for a short distance or a long one, on horseback or on foot, by land or by water, he has always been more than a match for me. As often as he has beaten me, so often have I laid down some new plan to beat him the next time, but I might just as well run a race with the wind. One would think, when looking at his picture, and judging from his aged brow and ancient figure, that, of necessity, he was growing a little infirm, but no, not he ! he has the constitution of a horse ; had he a frame of cast iron and sinews of wire, I question if they would wear half so well as his own.

One of my manifold races with old Time was on a late occasion ; the affair was not much to my credit, but, at all hazards, you shall be made acquainted with the matter. I had to breakfast with a friend at eight o'clock, and had rather committed myself than otherwise by intimating,

that as the clock struck, my shadow would be tolerably sure to darken his doorway. My friend was no lie-a-bed, but, on the contrary, an early riser, and accustomed, unfortunately for me, to be punctual at his meals.

It was a glorious summer morning, and I was up by times, so that, after attending to many things, by half-past seven, or a little more, shaven and shorn, and habited in my best black coat, I was ready to start in the direction of the dwelling-house to which I was invited. My watch I knew, or thought that I knew, was a quarter too fast: this allowed me almost three quarters of an hour for the performance of my walk.

The sun was blazing in the east as I closed the door after me, and stepped on at a nimble pace, well knowing that, though I had time enough for my purpose, I had not a minute to spare. Unluckily I had forgotten a paper, which required me to return, and this occasioned me no small inconvenience, for papers on which you can lay your hand at once, in a season of leisure, are often difficult to be found in a moment of haste. Full ten minutes were lost by this untoward occurrence.

Resolutely bent on making up for the delay thus occasioned, by increased speed, I walked hastily, and soon came to the church, when, to my

astonishment and confusion, I found out that my watch, instead of being, as I supposed, a quarter of an hour too fast, was absolutely a quarter of an hour too slow. Here was a pretty piece of business! A broiling hot day, a distance of a mile and a half good measure before me, breakfast, too, ready at eight precisely ; and the church clock within three minutes of striking What was to be done ? To alter my watch would only hinder me, without mending the matter. With a sort of desperate resolution I hurried on.

Long before I reached the second church on my road, the clock clamorously announced the hour of eight, every stroke thrilling through my brain and making my back ache. In my imagination I saw my meek-minded friend with his book, by the breakfast-table, now and then turning his eyes to the window. There was the uncut loaf and the fresh butter, and the frizzled bacon and the marmalade pot ; the cocoa was already made, and the tea-chest stood open ; and then rushed upon me the remembrance that, "as the clock struck, my shadow would be tolerably sure to darken the door-way."

You may smile at this event, and certainly I deserve to be smiled at, and laughed at, too, for my folly ; but had you witnessed my distress, I hope you would rather have pitied than derided

me. I was about to take a shorter road across some waste ground by the New River, when I caught sight of a board, forbidding any one to trespass on pain of prosecution. Then I met a cab which appeared to be empty, but on pressing forwards eagerly to engage it, I discovered that it was already occupied by two persons : thus, all things seemed against me. Never was the sun so hot, never was the hill so steep, never was the way so long, and never did time run so fast. I blamed my watch and the church clock, and tried hard, but all in vain, to justify myself. On I stumbled, the sun scorching my head, and the loose, hard gravel stones sadly hurting my feet, till, at last, with a red face, and bathed in perspiration, I entered the breakfast-room, where sat my forbearing friend, meekly awaiting my arrival, the finger of his Egyptian hieroglyphical time-piece pointing at half-past eight, if not at something more. Thus ended this hard struggle with old father Time—as usual, to his advantage. He seems to carry his scythe and his hour-glass without being at all incommoded by them. Incommoded ! Were you to put a pack-saddle on his back, and to load him like a camel, I verily believe that he would run on with quite as light a foot, and as sturdy a stride as ever.

I once had a match with old Time of a different

description, for I rode in a post-chaise, leaving my long-winged opponent to get along in the best way he could. We had to run from Southampton to Gosport, a distance of eight, ten, or a dozen miles, I really forget which. My mind was made up to win, but the worst of it was, old Sharp-scythe had made up his mind to win too. You shall have the particulars.

It happened that I wanted, with two friends, to get on board a steam-boat at Southampton, about to cross the Channel, but, owing to the want of proper information, we allowed the steam-boat to quit the pier, without being aware of her departure. As the loss of our passage was a matter of some importance, I at once proposed an attempt to overtake the steamer by galloping to Gosport in a chaise and four; one of my companions, however, objected to the expense of four horses; and so, there being no time to debate the matter, we set off in a chaise and pair, a mode of procedure which seemed to me to bring us fully within reach of the sarcastic proverb, "penny wise and pound foolish;" as, if we lost the race, we should not only lose the hire of the chaise and pair, but be, also, compelled to wait two or three days for another steamer, for steamers were less numerous then than they are now.

Well, off we set, fast enough in all conscience

for our horses, if not fast enough for ourselves. Crack went the whip, round went the wheels, and up and down went the driver in his stirrups, as if determined to earn the reward we had promised him, in the event of his being at Gosport in time. Every effort was made that could be made by a man and two horses, and the result of all was, that we reached Gosport, jumped into a boat with our luggage, and got out half a mile to sea just in time to witness the steam-packet passing by, mocking our efforts with the white foam of its paddle-wheels and the black smoke of its chimney. The race was lost. Had we been running against the steamer merely, another pair of horses might have enabled us to have won ; but as we were running against old father Time, too, I have some doubts whether we should have beaten him, even had we driven as many horses as Royalty drives in her state carriage. Why did we not procure proper information in proper time, and thus avoid expense, anxiety, and disappointment.

But now, having hitherto treated the subject jocosely, let me regard it for a moment in a graver point of view ; I love a little liveliness, but I love also, when I get you in a good humour, to whisper a word or two in your ears, that may sink deep into your hearts. In my foregoing

remarks, I have set forth in a somewhat humorous way, my own infirmity of not taking "time by the forelock;" or, in other words, of not making that prudent arrangement of time, which would enable me to discharge my several duties without hurry, confusion, and disappointment. How does this matter affect you? Can you bear to be catechised by old Humphrey?

Are you hurrying helter-skelter through your hours, and through your years, running after time with the Quixotic notion of overtaking it? or are you steadily keeping up with it, doing the year's duties in the year, the day's duties in the day, and the hour's duties in the hour? Point not your fingers at me, but answer for yourselves. My errors are no excuse for yours. I have not spared myself, nor will I now spare you.

Remember that "time is the stuff that life is made of," it ought not then to be wasted or misused. Things of value are weighed by small weights, and measured by small measures. Pebble stones are bought by cart-loads, but diamonds by carats. Look at a clock or a watch, and you will find that time is not meted by years, but by hours; not by months, but by moments. Count the grains of sand that tell out an hour in an hour-glass, and it will weary you. Judge by these things of the costliness of

time, and ask yourselves how you are expending your treasure.

It is not so much the amount of time we devote to an object, as the proper application of it that insures our success. He who is in time for the coach may perform a journey with ease by mid-day, which he who is a minute too late for it, may toil till midnight in vain to achieve. It is not by rising early and late taking rest, so much as by prudent forethought, arrangement, and regularity, that the daily duties of life are most easily and most satisfactorily discharged.

To sum up the whole—set a proper value on time, by keeping eternity constantly in view; devote your time to the best objects, apportion it prudently to the effectual discharge of your daily duties, and earnestly seek the Divine blessing on your thoughts, your words, and your deeds; then shall you avoid the hurry, the confusion, the anxiety, the racings against time—the disappointment, and the self-reproach too well known to Old Humphrey.

ON THE PEOPLE WHO PASS.

WHETHER at home or abroad, in the country or the town, in the highways or byways of the retired village or crowded city, it is to me a source of unceasing interest and pleasure to observe the people who pass. Talk of pictures! Why the fellow-beings that people our pathways form some of the most interesting pictures in the world, ever new and ever changing! When you see people in company, or meet them by appointment, they adapt their manners to the occasion; they are on their guard; they have a part to perform: but when they pass by, it is otherwise; they are free from restraint, and they are themselves. Again I say, that the people who pass, form some of the most interesting pictures in the world.

Whether the passer-by is a rich man or a poor man, a lady in satin or a woman habited in a threadbare cloak, is not of material consequence. Scores that I often meet, though neither remarkable for riches or poverty, are full of character, and I have very little doubt that Old Humphrey himself

has points and peculiarities enough about him to attract the attention, and excite the complacent smile of many a passer-by. I love to think so, and for this reason ; that, when fully persuaded my neighbours are amused at my peculiarities, I feel more at liberty to indulge in a good-humoured smile at theirs.

For years I have been accustomed to see, at a certain hour, a gentlemanly little man, of the old school, go by, carrying a walking-stick, and wearing an ample waistcoat, with drab-coloured breeches, light stockings, buckles at the knee, and strings in his shoes. He is evidently what is called “well to do in the world ;” for he walks leisurely, and seems always in good humour with himself and all around him. There is no hurry, no bustle, no care visible in his demeanour ; he seems to have a contented, affable, and untroubled spirit. On he goes, seeing everybody and everything ; now looking at a shop window or a passing vehicle ; now turning round to take a retrospective glance, apparently measuring with his eye the distance he has walked. The sun may shine, and the shower may fall, but he makes no difference in his clothing. Winter and summer find him the same ; for never yet have I seen a great coat on his back, or a boot on his leg. He can speak pleasantly to the poorest man he meets,

and yesterday I saw him exchanging, familiarly, a few words with the governor of the Bank of England. I take him to be an upright, respectable, contented, and worthy man ; and I hope that he is looking heavenward, for it is, indeed, time he should do so, seeing that, like myself, he carries years on his brow. He has my blessing.

I often meet, in my evening walk, a short, fat, clumsy-looking, ill-favoured man, dressed in a corduroy jacket with huge pockets, a blue apron, white cotton stockings not over clean, and ill-made, high-topped shoes. With a pipe in his mouth, he lounges at a corner, or leans over a gate, seemingly looking out for some one to exchange a word with him. He is the landlord of a small public house, that does, I fancy, very little business. I really do pity the man, for the long hours of his lazy life must hang heavy on his hands. I wonder whether he has a Bible ! One would think it would be the greatest blessing in the world to him. Rather than lead such a life as he does, I would gladly work in a saw-pit, or break stones on the highway.

Among the passers-by who have attracted my attention, is an old lady in faded mourning, who not only looks hopeless, but seems like one who never had any hope, so wo-begone is the expression in her face. Her eyes appear to be looking

for what she has no expectation of finding. She is evidently walking in the shade, with a heavy heart, and knows not, perhaps, that affliction cometh not forth of the dust, nor trouble of the ground. Mourner as she is, may she be led in her weakness to the Strong for strength, and be taught that God is her “refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble,” Psa. xlvi. 1.

For some years I had noticed, driving by in a phaeton and pair of horses, morning and evening, a portly-looking gentleman, with a broad-brimmed hat, peaked before and behind, and curled up at the sides. He was said to be either a stock-broker or a wholesale dealer in tobacco ; but how that might be, I cannot tell. It happened that in mounting an omnibus I found him sitting beside me, when that appearance of health in his face which had often caught my attention at a distance, assumed, in my eyes, a different character ; he was evidently an ailing man. He spoke to me freely of his ill health, and of some matters which had caused him much anxiety. Alas ! in a few days after, he was borne past me in his phaeton, in a dying state, and expired in a few hours. There is, indeed, but a step between us and death ; and happy is he who can say, “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth : and though after my

skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God," Job xix. 25, 26.

Not unfrequently do I see pass by a well-dressed lady, whose cheerful countenance and sunny smile are like a cordial to my heart. Two or three times have I seen her stop to speak to poor people. I have taken it into my head that she must be well known to the sick, the afflicted, and distressed; and that, by adding to their comforts, she increases her own. I know her in the distance, feel respect for her as she passes by, and honour her when she is out of sight.

Two or three times in the course of the week I have been in the habit of meeting a tall, pilgrim-like looking man, of some fifty or sixty years, dressed in well-brushed, dark-blue clothes, his coat having long skirts. His appearance is striking and interesting. His hat is rather broad in the brim, his knees are somewhat wide apart, and he carries in his hand a stick or staff, of the olden fashion, too tall by far for the top to be held in the hand like a common walking-stick: while his dexter grasp secures his staff, his weaker hand carries a blue bag. His fresh colour, healthy appearance, and lightness of foot, betoken temperance; while the intellect and thought visible in his face, bespeak him to be a man of talent and sober reflection. I may be wrong in supposing

him to occupy some place of trust and importance in the city ; but I can hardly err in pronouncing him to be a peculiar and respectable character. Latterly he has excited more than ordinary interest in my heart ; for not only is he clad in deep mourning, with the symbol of sorrow round his hat, but his walk has been slower than before, and his face impressed with a greater degree of seriousness. Whoever he may be, he has my sympathy. We are both aged, and I hope we are both pilgrims to the city with the golden gates.

There is another that I have often seen, habited in a light cloak, with an umbrella in his hand, when the heavens, in my judgment, (but I am not over weather-wise,) have had little in them prognosticating rain. It may be that he has some cause for carefulness, though he has a good broad back of his own, a round face, and a cheerful expression of countenance. All are not strong who appear so ; and I would that he had a little more colour in his cheeks. He walks with a steady pace, like one whose communings with himself are of a peaceful kind. Now and then he looks up at the clouds so earnestly that I have sometimes thought he was looking beyond them. Some weeks ago, I saw him a little way in the country, and the green trees, the blooming flowers, the rippling brook, and the bees and butterflies, seemed by

turns to engage his attention. Not an aged person passed without his speaking to him, and for every little boy or girl he had a book with a picture in it, and no doubt also some profitable instruction. As I passed by him in the church-yard, I saw some children around him, whom I guessed to be his own Sunday scholars : he was pointing to a little grassy mound, and was teaching them to recite this verse :

“ Putting off till to-morrow,
Will lead us to sorrow ;
Beginning to-day
Is the very best way.”

“ Oh,” thought I, “ if that is the nature of your communications, ‘ Peace be with you ; I wish you success in the name of the Lord.’ ”

Among those who pass by of an objectionable character, I notice a tall thin man, dressed in shabby black clothes. He has some claim to superior manners, but poverty and bad habits have set their mark upon him, not only soiling and destroying his dress, but also branding his brow. The first time I saw him, he affected to mistake me for a certain member of parliament : then came his ready tale of distress, followed by an appeal to my pocket. This appeal I responded to. Surely it was worth a trifle to be regarded as

an M.P.! The next time we met, he repeated his flattering mistake, and again I was accosted by him as a member of the legislature. The third time I saw him, he was in the very act of playing off the same prank on another, and thus I became better acquainted with his daily avocation. "Oh, oh!" thought I, "if everybody can be made a Member of Parliament at the rate of a shilling a head, I will be an M.P. no longer!" I often see him prowling about in the city, gaunt, seemingly hungry, and keen as a sportsman after his game. What a sad compact is that formed by poverty and deceit!

I might give you fifty other specimens, but, for the present, let the few that I have enumerated suffice. Once more, I say, that the people who pass, form one of the most interesting pictures in the world.

OLD HUMPHREY
TRIES HIS HAND
AS A PAINTER.

SAY not that I cannot paint a picture ; tell me not that I cannot sketch from the life ; for the yearning desire struggling within me, persuades me to the contrary. What, if a man has never practised as a limner—does that unfit him to be nature's draughtsman ? Must he, as a matter of course, sketch plaster models and marble statues, stroll about the fields with his portfolio, understand proportion and perspective, possess a just perception of grace and beauty, and be at home in all the arts of invention, composition, and colouring ? Must he, I say, as a thing of necessity, study at the Royal Academy, visit Italy, become learned in the Italian, the Dutch, the German, the Flemish, and the French schools, and have always at the tip of his tongue the names of Michael Angelo, Raphael, and Guido ; Albert Durer, Holbein, and Kneller ; Rembrandt, Gerard Dow, and Wouvermans ; Rubens, Teniers,

and Vandyke ; Claude, Poussin, and Le Brun ; must be as familiar with these things as with his old gloves, before he can sketch a faithful portrait from life ? No ; for though, without this knowledge, he might fail with his pencil and colour, he yet might succeed with his pen.

If the artist can more vividly represent a motionless form, a momentary feeling, and a changeless scene, the writer has an advantage in depicting the altering actions of the body, and in portraying the ever-variable transitions of the mind ; what the pen can effect in one sketch, the pencil would require twenty to perform. I have been arrested by the wonder-working power of the artist ; but the writer, too, can dash in lights and shadows, truthful expressions and vivid colourings, that are seen less by the eye, than they are felt by the heart : the pen, then, and not the pencil, must be the implement in the hand of Old Humphrey.

Not easy is it, faithfully and effectively, to paint human nature. Its very variety would present enough of difficulty, but, independent of this, it is ever striving to appear other than it is ; deceit wears a mask, hypocrisy walks in disguise, affectation expresses what it does not feel, modesty retires from view, virtue hides her acts from the public gaze ; so that the forms and features of

humanity, far from possessing a fixed and intelligible shape, are flitting and changing with the changing hour. If, then, he who would draw truthfully the portrait of human nature, had not a heart possessing the germs of good and evil to consult, and reflection and experience to lend him a helping hand, and if he did not see, hear, compare, reason, and carefully record, his sketch would be false in its proportions, and his picture prove a worthless caricature. But to my purpose. Humanity is before me, and my pen is ready in my hand.

Look at the blue-eyed babe, nestling in his mother's bosom, the easiest of all cradles. There is a smile on his dimpled cheek, and a peaceful joy spread over his rosy features. His tiny hand is lifted to the lips of his fond parent, who is chanting a silly song, and his infantile ears drink in, at the same moment, the soothing sounds of affection and folly.

His days roll on, and his mother, his guide, leads him astray, bribing and deceiving him into obedience, promising what she intends not to perform, threatening what she never means to inflict. His first plaything is an unmeaning rattle, for using which, by-and-by, he will be chidden; and his second a whip, that teaches him cruelty in his earliest years.

He puts on pride with his new-buttoned clothes, he pursues, unreproved, the fluttering butterfly, and, unconscious of his growing inhumanity, crushes, in his childish grasp, the painted creature that God has made to beautify creation. The worm is impaled on the crooked pin by his childish hand, and he gazes on the gasping minnow without pity, while it leaps on the grass in agony. Growing older, and harder, and bolder, he robs the poor bird of her eggs and her young, and enters on hostilities against the cat and the cur.

His lessons are excused, his indulgent parents hide his faults and inflate his childish vanity ; he is petted, and praised, and humoured ; but he is not taught to remember his Creator in the days of his youth. As the unpruned vine, cultivated by no careful hand, grows wild, so the unchecked human will becomes headstrong and unmanageable ; he honours not his parents, but disobeys them ; his distinctions of good and evil are confused and confounded ; he thinks as the wilfullest boy among his playfellows thinks, and imitates his daring.

He goes to school and adds to his knowledge, but not to his virtue, for a wrong direction has been given to his thoughts ; he believes it to be a clever thing to screen himself from his duties,

and to circumvent his companions. He stifles, by degrees, the feeling of shame and reproaches of conscience, and unblushingly denies the fault he has committed.

He becomes an apprentice, but neither diligence nor uprightness marks his course; he keeps company with bad companions, he reads the page of infidelity, learns to wrangle against truth, disregards the sabbath, and scoffs at the lowly followers of the Redeemer: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction,” Prov. i. 7.

How thorny is the pathway of the evil doer! How full of disappointment the expectation of the ungodly! He, now, regards his apprenticeship as slavery, he sees before him sparkling pleasures, and looks onward to the time when the chain of his captivity will be broken, that he may enjoy them :

Revolving years the moment brings
That from his bondage sets him free;
But when he grasps the glittering things
They are not what they were to be;
Hope bids him, with delusive power,
Look onward to some happier hour.

He saw unnumber'd pleasures wait
That manhood only could attain,

But now, when grown to man's estate,
He finds the cherish'd vision vain ;
For disappointment, grief, or care,
In every pleasure cries, Forbear !

He gives loose to his passions, for he is his own master, and he has no one to restrain him ;— the inebriating glass, the midnight revel, and the company of bad associates lead him on to evil ; he wrings the hearts of his kind, but foolish parents ; his youth and his strength are given to folly and vice, and God is not in all his thoughts.

The records of ruthless war are read by him ; he gazes on the laurel wreath and marble statue over the tomb of the conqueror, and pants for victory, without caring for the justness or unrighteousness of the quarrel. Successful violence, and ill-acquired dominion, are with him national reputation and renown. A battle is a glorious thing ; he hears not the cries of the wounded, but the roll of the drum, and the blast of the strife-provoking trumpet ; he regards not the tears of the orphan, and the wailing of the widow, but the flaunting of flags, the ringing of bells, and the cry of the exulting multitude.

In a moment of bravado, he becomes a soldier, and crosses the raging deep, as he says, “to serve his country.” Ill can he brook the discipline he is compelled to observe, and still less can he

endure, without murmuring, the harassing of a campaign. Short is his career ; maimed in battle, he returns home, with an incurable wound, and with an arm less than he took out with him, to boast of his exploits. But the railing infidel sinks apace ; his gibes and his jests become few, and the muttered despair and agony of his blaspheming tongue too plainly declare in his dying hour, that “there is no peace unto the wicked,” Isa. xlviij. 22.

I see that my picture, though the outline is correct, is somewhat too sombre—you approve not such breadth of shadow. Well! let me try again.

The sleeping infant, wrapt in forgetfulness, is now before me : he is slumbering in his little crib, and a pleasant dream, or a pleasant feeling, is dimpling his baby features with a smile. His mother sits beside him with her needle, and now and then she gazes affectionately on his lovely face, and then continues singing, with a soft and plaintive voice, the cradle hymn,—

“Hush, my babe, lie still and slumber ;
Holy angels guard thy bed ;
Heavenly blessings, without number,
Gently falling on thy head.”

Again and again his birth-day has come round.

He is still feeble and defenceless ; but if one might be allowed to conceive of guardian spirits assuming human shape, sure that is like one, who, in the form of his mother, fondly watches over him. He is kneeling beside his best earthly friend, with lifted hands lisping his evening prayer—learning from her look, as well as from her tongue, the love and reverence that are due to the Lord of life and glory.

His short frock is laid aside, he is dressed in a blue jacket and trousers ; nor can he gaze on the buttons or thrust his hands into his pockets without vanity ; but his mother is at hand, gently to divert and direct his thoughts. She tells him that the sheep has worn his clothes before him, and that the happy singing birds which are thankful for a crumb of bread, or a berry on the bush, have gayer clothing than he has.

He is taught to remove the crawling snail from the dangerous pathway ; to feed the redbreasts in the frosty morning ; to carry the basin of food, or the piece of money, to the poor widow ; and to divide his sweet morsel freely with his playmates. His faults are not allowed to pass unreproved. The evil of his heart is repressed, and he is trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; he obeys his parent, and regards God's holy word with reverence and love.

As a schoolboy he acquits himself with credit, and is welcomed home with satisfaction and joy. As an apprentice he deservedly gains the goodwill of his master, he hears the instruction of his father, and forsakes not the law of his mother. But does he never wander in error's thorny paths ? Yes. Does he not sometimes stumble ? He does ; but his wanderings end in disappointment, and his falls humble his heart, so that he is doubly watchful over himself, and feels doubly dependent on his heavenly Father. He goes to Him as a chastened child, and receives comfort. Oh, what a refuge in temptation, what a cordial in calamity, what a sheet anchor in the storms of the world is the throne of grace !

Guarded by prayers and guided by Christian counsel he launches into life. " Seest thou a man diligent in his business ? he shall stand before kings," Prov. xxii. 29. Knowest thou one whose delight is in the law of the Lord ? " whatsoever he doeth shall prosper," Psa. i. 3. He obtains a competency, gains the respect and confidence of the rich, and is regarded as a blessing by the poor ; his time, his purse, and his talents are well employed ; he is a counsellor in the day of difficulty, a comforter in sorrow, a friend in time of need, and a brother born for adversity.

His manhood has flown, his hairs are gray,

and his brow is furrowed with years, but his trials are borne with patience. “Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, nor trouble from the ground ;” his mercies are gratefully enjoyed, for he sees the Almighty hand that has bestowed them. While in time, he looks onward to eternity : while on earth, his desires mount upward to heaven. On the bed of death his faith fails not, for he knows in whom he has believed, and his last faltering accents are, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word : for mine eyes have seen thy salvation,” Luke ii. 29, 30.

ON THE CLOCK IN THE KENDAL MUSEUM.

SOME time ago I received, from an unknown correspondent, written in an excellent hand, the following communication :—

“ DEAR OLD GENTLEMAN,—I send you a new text. In the museum at Kendal there is a curious specimen of a clock, said to be one of the first ever made on the pendulum principle. It will still keep correct time. On the dial is the following inscription :—

‘ The gift of James Cock, Maior in Kendall, 1654,
to the Maior of the same succsesively.

‘ Time runneth ;—your work is before you.’

“ Dear Humphrey, your sincere well-wisher, one
who trusts he has been benefited by your ad-
dresses.”

Now this motto, and I would fain fling an old man’s thanks to the kind heart that has drawn my attention to it, is a very arresting one: it is

a text from which, for a few moments, I would freely discourse.

I said, and truly said, that my communication was written in an excellent hand ; but it is not an unfrequent case for good penmen to have their peculiarities ; *i*'s are left unspecked, *t*'s uncrossed, or you may look in vain for a full stop, or even a comma, in a whole page. One of my correspondents carries the straight stroke of a *g* as far above the line as an *l* or *h* ; another sprawls out the word *understanding*, or any other word of the same length, so as to occupy with it an entire line : while a third writes so small, that I question if he could not with his pen, or his cedar pencil, write a letter, or at least a note, on his thumb nail.

Not being able exactly to decide whether one letter of my correspondent was a *c* or an *o* ; and liking to be particular in such matters, I addressed a letter to the curator of the Kendal Museum, who, by return of post, kindly gave me the information I desired. It is not often that we send two hundred and sixty miles for the correction of a single letter of the alphabet. But now to the pleasant task that has been committed to me in so friendly a manner.

“ Time runneth !” Indeed it does, and so rapidly, that there is some danger of our not being able to keep up with it. “ The days of our years are-

threescore years and ten ; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away," Psa. xc. 10.

It is a practice with me, when I wish to impress my mind deeply with a subject, to try to hit upon some strong figure or striking illustration that embodies it. Before now, I have absolutely quailed with fear, when sitting at my books an hour or two after midnight, at that strengthy figure used by a learned doctor, wherein he asserts, that sitting up late at night, is like lighting the taper of life at both ends, and running a red hot poker through the middle of it. This alarming comparison has, many a time, scared me from my untimely studies, and I have slunk away like a culprit, to my repose.

Now I want a strong figure, one that will be likely deeply to impress the mind of the reader and the writer, with regard to time ; but I cannot find one to my purpose. I have likened time to a ship with spreading sails, about to depart for ever from the shore ; and to

A winged charioteer
Lashing his fiery steeds with furious haste ;
Shaping, like one on urgent business bent,
To heaven's high chancel his unerring way.

But whether it be that the mind, long accustomed to receive an idea in one shape, finds a difficulty to receive it in another, or from any other cause, neither of these figures equals the common one under which time is usually represented ; that of a stern and stalworth old man, with huge wings, a scythe, and an hour-glass.

In my youthful days I have gazed on this imaginary figure with awe, and arrayed it with dread reality. At this moment a rude, but effective engraving on wood, representing Time, lies before me. The old man has an iron frame, and an iron set of features, stern and pitiless. With him there is no compassion.

Kneel, sue, and supplicate, conjure, repent,
Weep tears of blood, and he will not relent.

Those wings betoken that in his flight he would leave the screaming eagle far behind him, and his scythe, cumbersome as it would be to another, encumbers him not. There is hardly any figure more impressive than the figure of Time.

And now comes on my remembrance a far more striking picture, drawn by an inspired hand, in the tenth chapter of Revelation : “The angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created

heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer."

But to my subject. "Time runneth; your work is before you." Oh that I had thoughts equal to my emotions, and words equal to my thoughts! "Time runneth;" why it seems but as yesterday that my father took me to a country boarding-school. I was then little more than five years old; and now! look at these gray hairs! This brow was then smooth and bright, and now it is graven by revolving years. The other day, as it were, I entered into life, and now the tomb is before me. "Time runneth" with a witness; and how have I neglected, wasted, and misused it!

Never, perhaps, did heart beat with warmer or with less selfish emotions, nor yearn with purer and higher and holier objects, than those which animated the youthful heart of Old Humphrey, and they were all to be embodied in his after life. Alas! hours, days, weeks, months, and years have passed by; and he sighs at the painful retrospect, how little has he done, and how much has he yet to do! Mortal man wastes his hours and his years in the pursuit of trifles, gewgaws of fame, and baubles of glittering dust, while the time is hastening on,

yea, is almost at hand, when moments will be worth millions !

And how has it been with you ? Has time hurried on, outrunning your intentions, outstripping your projects, and leaving you far behind, in the midst of neglected resolutions, abandoned undertakings, and half-executed plans for God's glory, and the welfare of mankind ? Is your heart merry or mourning ? Rejoicing at the works of your hands, or weeping over the wreck of your goodly resolves ? I need not ask : we have both done what we ought not to have done, and left undone what we ought to have done. We have both sinned and sorrowed, and, alike, stand in need of reproof and consolation.

But shall we do well to sit down, and waste the few remaining sands in the hourglass of life in unavailing regret that the past have run so swiftly ? No, no ! If we have but little time, the more energy should we display. "Time runneth" still, and our work is yet before us. Let us up, then, and be doing, with all the faculties and energies of our bodies and our souls.

Perhaps, as time runneth so rapidly, we cannot do better than ask ourselves this plain question, Were this present day known by us to be the last we should spend on this side the eternal world, as it possibly may be, to what would our attention

be directed ? Oh, how the little objects that usually occupy us seem scattered right and left by this inquiry ! Should we give a thought to the news of the day ? the driving of a bargain ? the heaping together a hillock of glittering dust ? the laying out money to advantage ? the cut of our clothes ? the bits and drops we intended to consume ? or, in short, to the securing any worldly advantage, or the forwarding of any worldly object ? The very suggestion appears a mockery. Nothing, no nothing, in comparison with our eternal welfare, and that of those dear to us, would be regarded of sufficient importance to engage our thoughts.

Think not that I am, here, undervaluing the affections that bind man to man, or that I am oblivious to the numberless duties and kind intentions which men, as fathers, husbands, brothers, children, relatives, friends, and neighbours, are bound to regard. These things should be attended to by us, and the other not neglected : but every other object is as dust in the balance, compared with the eternal welfare of the soul. We should, then, be honest to ourselves and to those dear to us, in making the eternal welfare of the soul the first object of our attention and desires.

Are we right in this matter, standing on a rock ? Is our faith firm, and our hope clear as

daylight? Are we looking to the hills whence cometh our help? relying without subterfuge or reservation on the merits and mercy of the Redeemer, and the all-sufficient sacrifice offered up on the cross for sinners? or are we diminishing the value of that sacrifice, polluting the pure fountain of living waters, and gainsaying the word of God, by putting in some claim to heaven on our own account, and mingling some miserable amount of our own supposed merits with the costly ransom that has been paid by our Redeemer? It behoves us to see to this; for time runneth, and our work is before us. We cannot make ourselves pure, but we may go to the fountain that is open for sin and uncleanness. We cannot save ourselves, but we can go as supplicating sinners to that Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.

Is there aught to be done by us for the Redeemer's glory? let us do it, for time runneth. Is there aught left undone of duty, kindness, forgiveness, affection, and benevolence to our fellow-men? let us do it; for our work is before us. Stirring up our thankfulness towards God, and our good will towards mankind, let us be diligent, in every good word and work, encouraging one another in our way to heaven.

I should like to see the old clock in the Kendal

Museum : and it ever I find myself in the neighbourhood of the lakes, it shall not be passed by without a visit from me. In the mean time, if the few meagre remarks here made should call forth salutary reflections in the minds of my readers, my pen will not have unprofitably commented on the impressive motto forwarded me by my unknown, kind correspondent. Gladly would I write a word of warning on their hearts ; and willingly would I have the inscription, " TIME RUNNETH ; YOUR WORK IS BEFORE YOU," graven on my own.

OLD HUMPHREY IN A DIFFICULTY

WELL do I remember, that many years ago, a man of talents, a professional friend of mine, a member of a philosophical society, gave a lecture on phrenology to a goodly assembly of both sexes. In the course of his remarks, he pointed out the difference of structure in the head of a man and the head of a woman. Carried away by his subject, which was then comparatively novel, he made some observations which seemed to give the palm of intellect so necessarily and decidedly to man, that no small offence was taken by his female auditors, who were hardly disposed to concede that which he appeared to take for granted as a thing of course. The lecture occupied, I think, about two hours ; but it took more than as many years to blot out the unfavourable impression against himself which it left on the mind and memory of his fair friends.

Now, though I have a very vivid remembrance of the penalty imposed for my friend's inadvertent transgression, yet I am about to set my

foot on ground almost as tender as that on which he ventured to tread. We are always persuading ourselves that we shall succeed where others have failed — that we shall be able to stand where others have fallen ; and it may be owing to this common infirmity that I now hope to find a way where many have lost themselves, and to reply to a difficult inquiry, without, on the one hand, giving offence, or, on the other, withholding just and profitable information.

It is a common thing with me to have questions proposed, and inquiries made, to which I do not feel equal to reply. In such cases, I usually pass them over, trusting to the consideration and kindness of my friends to put a fair construction on my silence. This course, however, cannot always be taken ; and at the present moment I feel that I ought not to refuse a reply to the following questions, proposed for my consideration, by an intellectual and well-informed lady :

“ When is the manifestation of a masculine mind unbecoming in woman ?

“ Why should woman be considered so inferior to man, as to be deemed an intruder the moment she begins to think for herself, and to express her opinion ?

“ Why should not women acquire some of the characteristics by which men are pre-emi-

nently distinguished, without losing any of their own?"

You will see at once that I am in a dilemma, that my position is one of considerable difficulty, and that it will require some little tact to maintain it with credit. Come, then, speed, with thy flying fingers; wit, with thy ready tongue; truth, with thine eagle eye; knowledge, with they mental stores: wisdom, with thy thoughtful brow; and experience, with thy chastened judgment; assist me to give a meet response to my fair questioner. But, first, let me fancy her in the very imposing and picturesque attitude of sitting in an elevated chair, an ostrich feather or twain waving in her new cap with the crimson riband, demanding, with an influential toss of the head, an expressive consciousness of the rights of woman, and a resolute and inflexible determination to preserve them inviolable visible in her countenance, "Why should woman be considered so inferior to man, as to be deemed an intruder the moment she begins to think for herself, and to express her opinions?"

Willingly, had I leisure, would I ring a few lively changes on the musical bells of my imagination, as a kind of prelude to my graver strain; but old Father Time, as he passes me with his scythe and hour-glass, holds up his aged hand,

and knits his aged brows. "Give the lady an answer," says he, "in a gentlemanly manner, at once; for she deserves it." In obedience to my venerable monitor, I thus proceed :

TO MY RESPECTED CATECHIST.

Your communication on the mind of woman lies before me; and I, as in duty bound, though but ill qualified for the task, will give you my best thoughts on the matter. On several occasions has the inquiry been made, whether the intellectual faculties of woman are equal to those of man, and the question has usually been decided according to the views of the parties engaged in it.

Those who contend for equality of intellect in both sexes, bring forward female instances of great learning, sound judgment, and general ability; and when told that such instances are few compared with celebrated characters among men, reply, that this is sufficiently accounted for by the superior opportunities men possess of acquiring knowledge, and the great difference in their habits and education. For my own part, much rather would I leave the general question in abeyance, than have it decided in a proud and arbitrary manner; for certain it is, that often, in the presence of well-educated females, I, and

men immeasurably wiser, have blushed with the consciousness of our own inferiority. Still, in dealing faithfully with the inquiry, I would not willingly shrink from giving an opinion.

By some general agreement, when entered into, or on what precise grounds, I cannot say, the opinion has long been almost universally entertained, that man has the advantages of bodily strength and mental power ; and woman those of external charms, elegance, sweetness, delicacy, feeling, patience, and a hundred other excellent qualities, in agreement with the declaration of Milton —

“ For contemplation he, and valour formed,
For softness she, and sweet attractive grace.”

Nor do I see that either man or woman can, with justice, call in question or complain of this generally received opinion. If it be no just cause of disparagement to either animal that the lion has not the grace of the antelope, nor the antelope the power of the lion, in like manner it cannot be a just ground of reproach, either that man possesses not the sensibility and delicacy of woman, or woman the bodily and mental force of man.

You are too reasonable not to concede this, and, therefore, I will venture the conclusion, that the

proper cultivation of the animal and intellectual powers of man and woman depends on its fitness to qualify them usefully to fill the stations they are severally called on to occupy. Man is the guide and protector, as well as the friend and companion of woman : his bodily and mental endowments, then, should be called out in a full, bold, energetic, and decisive manner, that he may properly sustain his position ; while woman, as the affectionate sharer of his joys, the kind soother of his cares, the meek corrector of his stormy passions, the prudent director of his household, and the amiable instructress of his children, especially in their younger years, should be educated suitably for these important objects. Should she, on the contrary, fit herself to take the lead, and man only qualify himself to follow, the usages of mankind, with the authority of Holy Scripture, would be reversed, and a door opened for the introduction of unnumbered evils. These preparatory remarks being made, not arrogantly but with the very spirit of fairness and candour, I will consider the knotty questions you have propounded.

1. When is the manifestation of a masculine mind unbecoming in woman ?

I should say, as a general reply, when it wounds by its severity, offends by its pride, or

disgusts by its boldness. As a high-bred steed requires a strong rein to control its spirit, so a masculine mind in woman requires a double guard of feminine qualities. When strength of understanding is possessed by one of agreeable form and features, elegant demeanour, humility of mind, and sweetness of temper, it is doubly delightful. In such a case, agreeable manners give an added charm to intellect, and intellect imparts a lustre to amiability.

2. Why should woman be considered so inferior to man, as to be deemed an intruder the moment she begins to think for herself, and to express her opinion ?

No sensible and right-minded person, surely, would either think or act in the manner here supposed. If a woman reflects with judgment, and expresses herself with modesty, good sense, and ability, she must instantly become, in the estimation of the discerning, an object of respect, and will receive that attention to which she is justly entitled. When surrounded by the vain and thoughtless, or when she expresses her opinion in an assuming spirit, the case may be otherwise.

3. Why should not woman acquire some of the characteristics by which men are pre-eminently distinguished, without losing her own ?

I can really see no good reason why she should not, if these characteristics will make her more useful, more amiable, more companionable, or more happy. You are justified, certainly, in attaining any of our characteristics, so long as you do not lose any of those peculiarly your own. This appears to me the point on which the question turns, and the point wherein, I fear, even learned ladies have erred. They have not usually succeeded in eminently attaining our characteristics, without a fearful loss or modification of their own. You will allow me to speak plainly. In cheerfulness of demeanour, in the prudent management of a household, in cleanliness, punctuality, forethought, and attention to the comfort of a husband and children, I would match many women of limited education against all the learned ladies in the world.

It is well known to you that the Christian world have set themselves against cards and dice, those unoffending pieces of pasteboard and ivory, and with some reason too ; for these things have been so frequently perverted to bad purposes, on account of the fatal facility they afford to people to do wrong, that they are regarded with suspicion, and set aside. Something like this has taken place with respect to learning among females ; learned ladies have been avoided, cen-

sured, and even ridiculed, however creditable their talents, and estimable the information they have gained, simply because, in the endeavour to attain our characteristics, they have compromised their own.

Learning has imparted, in some cases, a masculine boldness to woman, and we cannot part with her retiredness without a pang. The loss of

“ Those graceful acts,
Those thousand decencies that daily flow
From all her words and actions,”

and that winning diffidence and modesty that mark her mien, would be but ill supplied by all that languages can give, or books impart.

It has fallen to my lot to know a few fair, I am almost tempted to say a few of the fairest specimens of females of talent, whose unusual powers were unmixed with aught that was unwomanly; and willingly would I see the number of such abundantly increase.

Shall I tell you a secret that is well worth knowing? It is this: We, “lords of the creation,” venerate woman for her piety; we honour and respect her for her integrity and judgment; we admire her for her wit, talents, and accomplishments; and we love her for her personal charms and her feminine qualities and virtues.

She, then, who would be venerated, respected, and admired, must excel in piety, integrity, judgment, wit, talent, and accomplishments; while she who would be loved, must cultivate with care the personal charms God has bestowed upon her, and guard, as the apple of her eye, her feminine qualities and virtues.

I have said more than I intended, and only wish that it was more worthy your perusal. Time is hastening onwards, and we are hastening on too: let not, then, our contention be, which has the higher faculties, but rather, which shall apply them to the best advantage. If led on by infirmity of purpose, we may commit many errors in the pursuit of knowledge; but hardly shall we err, if our objects are really the Redeemer's glory, and the welfare of those around us for time and eternity. Whatever be our attainments, may the language of our heart's be, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory," Psa. cxv. 1.

I remain, yours,
With true respect, and Christian regard,
OLD HUMPHREY.

ON EXAGGERATED EXPRESSIONS.

SOME time ago a correspondent, whom I would not willingly neglect, requested me to pen a few plain remarks on the common evil of giving utterance to inflated expressions and remarks in common conversation.

It is a somewhat ungrateful task to tell those who would shrink from the imputation of a falsehood that they are in the daily habit of uttering untruths ; and yet, if I proceed, no other course than this can be taken by me. It is of no use to adopt half measures ; plain speaking saves a deal of trouble.

I love the man who steps along on his toes, that he may not tread on the toes or the heels of his neighbours. Some are remarkable for this habitual tenderness to their fellow-creatures, and it does my heart good to see it ; but in a case where trifling is losing time, and decision is really necessary, we must run the risk of giving offence if we would really do good.

My correspondent says, that I make capital

“ caps ;” and that if all those who need them would wear them, my hints would be very profitable. I am, however, sadly afraid that most of the caps I make would fit my own head quite as well as they would fit the heads of my neighbours. But to my task.

The examples about to be given by me of exaggerated expressions, are only a few of the many that are constantly in use. Whether you can acquit yourselves of the charge of occasionally using them, I cannot tell ; but I dare not affirm for myself that I am altogether guiltless.

“ I was caught in the wet last night ; the rain came down in torrents.” Most of us have been out in heavy rains ; but a torrent of water pouring down from the skies would a little surprise us, after all.

“ I am wet to the skin, and have not a dry thread upon me.” Where these expressions are once used correctly, they are used twenty times in opposition to the truth.

“ I tried to overtake him, but in vain ; for he ran like lightning.” The celebrated race-horse Eclipse is said to have run a mile in a minute ; but poor Eclipse is left sadly behind by this expression.

“ He kept me standing out in the cold so long, I thought I should have waited for ever.” There

is not a particle of probability that such a thought could have been for one moment entertained.

“As I came across the common, the wind was as keen as a razor.” This is certainly a very keen remark ; but the worst of it is that its keenness far exceeds its correctness.

“I went to the meeting, but had hard work to get in ; for the place was crowded to suffocation.” In this case, in justice to the veracity of the relator, it is necessary to suppose that successful means had been used for his recovery.

“When I mentioned it to her, she turned as pale as a sheet.” I am sceptical enough to believe, that had an actual comparison taken place, it would have been found otherwise.

“I have been sadly troubled with head-ache ; I thought I should have died, I was so ill.” If they who use this expression on every light occasion, did really reflect on death as frequently as they represent themselves to do so, it might be attended with the most salutary consequences.

“You would hardly know her again, she is as thin as a thread-paper.” Either the thread-paper must have been of an unusual size, or she must have been very thin indeed.

“We came along the lane, a horrid road, up to our knees in mud.” Some people a little more diffident, satisfy themselves with saying, “It was

over my shoe-tops in mud." All I can say is, that if either the one statement or the other be correct, it is high time the road should be mended.

"He is a shrewd fellow! as deep as a draw-well." There is an old adage, that truth lies at the bottom of a well: I am afraid that it is not at the bottom of this drawwell.

"We stood there for an hour: my feet were as cold as ice." If the feet were once as cold as ice, there would be very little heat left in the head or the heart.

"Oh, nothing will hurt him; he is as strong as a horse." Some go even farther than this, and say, "as strong as an elephant!" but both expressions are too strong to be consistent with fact.

"It must have been a fine sight; I would have given the world to have seen it." Fond as most of us are of sight-seeing, this would be buying pleasure at a dear price indeed; but it is an easy thing to proffer to part with that which we do not possess.

"It made me quite low spirited, my heart felt as heavy as lead." We most of us know what a heavy heart is, but lead is by no means the most correct metaphor to use in speaking of a heavy heart.

"I could hardly find my way; for the night was as dark as pitch." I am afraid we have all, in our turn, calumniated the sky in this manner; pitch is many shades darker than the darkest night we have ever known.

"He ran till his face burned like a fire-coal." Ay, and if every one blushed in the same proportion in which he departed from truth, he who uses this form of speech would have a face ruefully red, though not exactly burning like a fire-coal.

"I have told him of that fault fifty times over." Five times would, in all probability, be much nearer the fact than fifty.

"I never closed my eyes all night long." If this be true, you acted unwisely; for had you closed your eyes, you might, perhaps, have fallen asleep, and enjoyed the blessing of refreshing slumber; if it be not true, you act more unwisely still, by stating that as a fact which is altogether untrue.

"He was in such a passion that he foamed at the mouth like a mad dog." Rather mad language this; but many a man in his descriptions acts like a bad painter, who, almost always, has too much colour in his brush.

"He is as tall as a church spire." I have met with some tall fellows in my time, though the

spire of a church is somewhat taller than the tallest of them.

“ You may buy a fish at Billingsgate as big as a jackass for five shillings.” I certainly have my doubts about this matter ; but if it be really true, the people at Billingsgate must be jackasses indeed, to sell such large fishes for so little money.

“ He was so fat he could hardly come in at the door.” Most likely the difficulty here alluded to was never felt by any one but the relater ; supposing it to be otherwise, the man must have been very broad, or the door very narrow.

“ You don’t say so ! why, it was enough to kill him !” The fact that it did not kill him is a sufficient reply to this unfounded observation ; but no remark can be too absurd for an unbridled tongue.

Thus might I run on for an hour, and, after all, leave much unsaid on the subject of exaggerated expressions. We are hearing continually the comparison, “ black as soot, white as snow, hot as fire, cold as ice, sharp as a needle, dull as a door-nail, light as a feather, heavy as lead, stiff as a poker, and crooked as a crab-tree,” in cases where such expressions are quite out of order.

The practice of expressing ourselves in this inflated and thoughtless way is more mischievous than we are aware of. It certainly leads us to

sacrifice truth ; to misrepresent what we mean faithfully to describe ; to whiten our own characters, and sometimes to blacken the reputation of a neighbour. There is an uprightness in speech as well as in action, that we ought to strive hard to attain. The purity of truth is sullied, and the standard of integrity is lowered, by incorrect observations. Let us reflect upon this matter freely and faithfully. Let us love truth, follow truth, and practise truth in our thoughts, our words, and our deeds.

ON PROVIDENTIAL PRESER- VATIONS.

IT is a profitable thing for a pilgrim to look forward to the city with the golden gates ; for a sight of the shining portals of heaven animates him to bear with patience, and to overcome with perseverance, the trials he meets with on earth. Not that he can always do this ; for oftentimes there is a cloud in the distance, and a mist around him that obscures his view : but when he can catch a glimpse of his heavenly inheritance, it gives strength to his fainting soul. Nor is it an unprofitable thing, while resting beside the King's highway, to give a backward glance at the crooked lanes, the thorny places, and the quagmires through which he has been led and mercifully sustained. Let us apply these observations to ourselves.

It may be that you are younger than I am, and have not borne so long the heat and burden of the day ; or it may be, that your years outnumber mine ; in either case, your memory will, no doubt, serve to remind you of many narrow escapes, or

rather of many merciful preservations, from imminent danger.

Now it seems to me that we hardly think enough of these things ; for consider, what can be a stronger pledge that God will protect us in future dangers, than the knowledge that he has preserved us in those which are past ? I am not calling on you to enumerate your mercies, for you may as well try to count the blades of grass, as attempt to do that ; but you may recall to your mind such particular instances of God's almighty and merciful preservation, as may constrain you to say, "O Lord, open thou my lips ; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise," Psa. li. 15.

In order that you may be persuaded to sum up your preservations, I will here relate to you a few of mine. By them you will see that if the heart beating in the bosom of Old Humphrey be not grateful, it must be harder than stone.

In the days of my childhood, a servant brought a pan of hot coals to warm the bed, wherein I had been put without her knowledge. You may guess what followed. My agonizing screams confused and confounded poor Betty, and the pan of coals was not removed till it had inflicted on me injuries that placed my life in danger. On what a spider's thread our existence seems to hang ! What is our life ? " It is even a vapour, that

appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away," James iv. 14.

Not long after I had recovered my strength from my accident by the warming-pan, I fell through the cellar window of a half-finished house, by which misfortune my forehead, striking against the sharp edge of the brick-work, was laid open. For some time I lay bleeding, and was taken up for dead. Grey hairs are now growing on my head, but the scar on my brow is visible still. Truly may we say to one another, whether we are old or young, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth," Prov. xxvii. 1.

When a school-boy, in attempting to descend a high, rocky bank, my toe caught under the root of a tree, and I was pitched down headlong into the hollow way beneath. A sloping heap of sand at the bottom eased my fall, and, most probably, saved my neck from being broken. Surely dangers are ever around us, and "our days upon earth are a shadow," Job viii. 9.

Before I could swim I was a good diver, and often amused myself with diving in deep water to a certain point, where, when I rose, I caught hold of the top of the granite stones which formed the side of the basin. On one occasion the water was so low, that, when I arrived at the accustomed

point, I could not reach the granite stones. Again and again I struggled desperately to effect my purpose, but in vain, and was on the point of sinking, being much out of my depth, when a swimmer caught hold of me.

The result is the same, whether God of his goodness sends an angel from his heavenly throne to save us when in danger, or strengthens the arm of a fellow-mortal for the work of our deliverance. To him, in either case, be the glory and the praise : “ It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High,” Psa. xcii. 1.

In going, on a certain occasion, into an upper room of a very old house, the crazy floor gave way under my feet. Had I not caught hold of the joist, most likely I should have found my way into the cellar, and this record of mishaps would never have been noted down by Old Humphrey : “ Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is ; that I may know how frail I am,” Psa. xxxix. 4.

I once accompanied a friend of mine to examine the roof of a chapel, and, while the ringer of the bell was absent from the belfry, we clambered up past the bell to the roof. The place we clambered through was narrow, so that the bell, which then stood with its clapper upwards, when swinging

round occupied almost the whole space. My friend and I had crept through a trap-door to the roof, and were on the point of returning; already had I bent my body to creep through the trap-door, when a loud creak made me withdraw my head. The sound of the ponderous bell at that moment thrilled through my heart. The ringer had returned to the belfry, and had pulled off the bell, not knowing that any one was above. Had not that timely creak warned me of my danger, the massy bell must of necessity have dashed me in pieces. In such danger, my language might indeed have been, "There is but a step between me and death," 1 Sam. xx. 3.

At a period of my life, when I was somewhat more nimble than I am now, I foolishly ventured to cross a precipice on the side of a mountainous hill. The hill was several hundred feet in height, and the precipice, perhaps, between one and two hundred. I had supposed the side of the precipice to be hard and firm; but no sooner had I got to the steepest part, than the ground gave way beneath me. There was no hope but in dashing on, and this I did with all the headlong energy of despair, the earth crumbling beneath my foot every step I took. When I stood on the opposite side of the precipice in safety, I looked back with a degree of terror on the jeopardy that had well nigh de-

stroyed me: “Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time,” Eph. v. 15, 16.

During my first visit to London, a friend and I took a boat on the river Thames. Those who remember the fall of water through the centre arch of old London Bridge, when the tide was returning, well know, that to pass through it, in a small boat, without a very skilful boatman, was very dangerous.

My friend and I, both inexperienced in rowing, had taken up the oars to paddle about in the stream, giving the boatman a cheesecake or two, with which to employ himself. Imperceptibly we got into the strong current, and in a few minutes should have been hurried through the centre arch, and perhaps into eternity, had not the boatman, dashing down his cheesecakes, suddenly caught hold of the oars and rowed for his life. We shot through one of the side arches like an arrow from a bow, and escaped with our lives, not unmindful of our danger, nor unthankful for our preservation by Him “in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind,” Job xii. 10.

In France, I was one night, when travelling, so beset with peril, and driven to such extremity, that I took out my knife, holding it ready opened in my hand to defend myself from any sudden attack.

of my treacherous companion. I had reason to "offer unto God thanksgiving," and to pay my "vows unto the Most High," Psa. l. 14.

Never was I in greater danger than on the occasion of seeing a female relative home late at night. Not being able to make the servant hear by ringing the bell, and fearing lest an accident had taken place, I went round to the back of the house, to clamber over the garden wall. As I stood on the wall, the casement of a cottage near was gently opened : little did I then dream of my perilous situation. At that moment a loaded pistol was directed against my life. The owner of the cottage, hearing people talking, had got up to the window, and seeing, as he supposed, a robber scaling the wall, he stepped back, laid hold of his loaded pistol, cocked it, and placing his finger on the trigger, aimed it at me. At this instant he thought that he recognised his neighbour's voice speaking to me ; and thus was I again mercifully preserved : "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good ; because his mercy endureth for ever," Psa. cxviii. 1.

The last instance of imminent peril that I shall now record, is one of a singular kind. I had descended a copper mine, habited in the flannel jacket and slouched hat of a miner, carrying a candle in my left hand. If I remember right, the

mine was double the depth of an ordinary coal mine. I went down not less than forty or fifty ladders placed perpendicularly against the sides of the different shafts.

After reaching the bottom, visiting every part of the mine, and observing the different operations performed by the miners, I began to ascend the perpendicular ladders, bathed with perspiration occasioned by heat and fatigue.

I had ascended about midway, when grasping one of the rounds of the ladder on which I stood, it came out loose in my hand. It happened at the moment that my left hand, which held the candle, had a sufficient hold of the ladder to prevent my fall, otherwise I must have been precipitated down the fearful abyss beneath me. Now, ought not Old Humphrey to be among the first and foremost of those whose hearts and tongues cry aloud, "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord?" Psa. cl. 6.

Haply these instances of providential preservation will recall to your memory some of your own that you had forgotten, and prompt you to pay some fraction of the debt of gratitude you owe to your heavenly Father for his parental care and continued loving-kindness; so that we may together "sing unto the Lord, and make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Let us

come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms," Psa. xcvi. 1, 2.

" When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise!"

ON CLIMBING.

“ŒCUMENICAL!” said I, raising my eyebrows, “that is a flight above the common-place understanding of Old Humphrey.” The word was used, as I passed, by a pompous-looking man in conversation with another, who was plainly dressed: “What we want,” said he, “is not a trifling alteration, but an œcumenical measure for the good of man.” Perhaps it was the pride of my heart which told me that if I did not understand the meaning of the word “œcumenical,” it was not at all unlikely that he in plain clothes, to whom it was addressed, would be equally at a loss with myself. You may be sure that I took the earliest opportunity of consulting my dictionary, when it appeared clear enough to me that an “œcumenical” measure was neither more nor less than a “general” measure that referred to the world at large.

Willingly do I concede to every one the right to choose his own language in making known his opinions, though I may call in question the prudence of adopting such terms as are not likely to be generally intelligible. The word “œcumenical,” however, has set me reflecting on the dis-

position there is among us to indulge in pride of different kinds, to set ourselves up as people of importance, or, in other words, to climb up one above another. With your leave, I will pursue my reflections.

Is it not strange that a being who possesses nothing good which God has not given him, whose mortal body the worms will shortly destroy, should have a heart that is haughty, an eye that is lofty, and a disposition to climb above his fellows? Yet so it is. There have been climbers in all ages, and the fearful falls, the account of which has been handed down to us from one generation to another, have seemingly done but little to arrest this aspiring propensity.

Haman was a climber, and terrible was his fall, though he was at last lifted up against his will fifty cubits higher than he wished to be.

King Hezekiah was a climber. "Oh," thought he, "I will show these Babylonish messengers what a mighty monarch I am. They shall see my treasure-house, my precious things, my gold and silver, and all that I possess, that they may tell their master Berodach-baladan of my riches, my greatness, and my majesty!" Poor Hezekiah! He fell at the word of the prophet from the lofty pinnacle to which he had raised himself. All that he had was to be carried away into a strange

country, and his sons were to be servants in the palace of the king of Babylon. Bitterly did Hezekiah repent his climbing!

David was a climber, even though taken from the sheepfolds. Not satisfied with the greatness to which God had raised him, stirred up by Satan, he must needs climb up higher, by magnifying himself in the eyes of his people. Those whom he ruled must be numbered, that it might be known how many mighty men he could command, and how numerous they were above whose heads he was raised. Heavy was his fall on that sad occasion,—for the famine, the sword, and the pestilence were set before him, and seventy thousand of his men were cut off from the land. See what comes of climbing!

Long was the revel, and loud the clamorous mirth that rose to the roof of the gorgeous palace of the king of Babylon. Many a chalice brimmed with the juice of the grape, sparkling and moving itself aright, had been quaffed to the gods of gold and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone; and the golden vessels of the house of the Lord had been grasped by the unhallowed hands, and drained by the blaspheming lips of Belshazzar, his princes and his lords, his wives and his concubines; but suddenly the king's countenance was changed, for he saw the mysterious hand-

writing on the wall ; his thoughts troubled him, the joints of his loins were loosened, and his knees smote one against another. He climbs too high who tries to get above the power of the Holy One. Belshazzar was a climber, and fearful was his fall : " In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain," Dan. v. 30.

Have you forgotten the pride of Herod, when he climbed so high by his majesty and his speech-making, that the people cried out, " It is the voice of a god, and not of a man !" Never was a more disastrous fall. Smitten by the angel of the Lord, " he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost," Acts xii. 22, 23.

We cannot consider too frequently, that man, in the height of his intellect, in the pride of his understanding, is a poor dependent creature ; dependent from the cradle to the tomb, not only on his Creator, but on the meanest things that are around him. His life is a gift : the faculties of his body, and the endowments of his mind, are bestowed upon him by a heavenly hand,—a boon that he does well ever to remember. See him a helpless infant, unable to speak, to stand, or to stir, for his own advantage. See him in the glory of his strength, conquering even the great inhabitants of the deep ; in the pride of his mental power, dragging down from

above the lightning of heaven ; even then is he as dependent as when he was a child. The air must be purified for him, or he cannot breathe ; the earth must bring forth its produce, and supply him with fuel, and the animal world must feed him and clothe him. See him in hoary age, once more a child in intellect, and bowed down with bodily infirmity. Really, really, there seems no excuse for us when we proudly try to climb above the heads of those around us.

The word “œcumeneical,” with which I began my remarks, has already, as you see, drawn me out to some length, and yet I am inclined to proceed a little farther, for I need not limit my illustrations to ages gone by, seeing that they abound in more modern times ; and if we take the trouble to look for them, we shall find enough, and too many of them in our own hearts.

Not many years ago, we had a mighty climber, who could not look on a throne without desiring to scramble up to it. The height he did attain would have made any other mortal giddy,—and the general opinion is that it made him so, for he came tumbling down when he least expected it ; the diadem fell from his brow, and he died a captive in the isle of St. Helena :

Napoleon ! we leave thee to slumber and sleep—
Oh gaze on thine idol, Ambition, and weep !

But while we now and then hear of crowned heads climbing up one above another, we may see the same things continually going on in common life. Every day and every hour might furnish us with examples in all grades of society, for pride is the besetting sin of thousands. This disposition to get one above another is common, I had almost said universal, though we discern it more quickly in others than in ourselves. How often have I climbed, and fallen ! How often have I suffered for the pride of my heart !

In looking at Johnson's Dictionary the other day, it struck me that the learned doctor was in a climbing fit when he wrote his meaning to the word "network;" for he defines it to be "any thing reticulated or decussated, at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections." Why, the worthy doctor has outdone my "œcumeneical" friend twenty times over !

If we bestowed half the pains to climb heavenward that we do to raise ourselves one above another, we should enjoy much more peace than we now have, and endure much less perplexity ; but there are some who, while professing to be pilgrims to the heavenly city, go on their way as proudly as if they had a right to enter heaven ; and yet they have nothing to show should they ever come to the golden gate. "See," says

Christian, in the Pilgrim's Progress, "this is the coat he gave me freely on the day when he stripped me of my rags!"

I might go on, but the subject will be much better prolonged by your reflections than by my pen. As I fear we are all given to climbing, some one way and some another, so may we all profit by the words of king Solomon, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall," Prov. xvi. 18.

ON COLLECTIONS IN PLACES OF DIVINE WORSHIP.

So long as Old Humphrey is content to scribble about his own infirmities, to relate whimsical occurrences, or even to generalize on the errors of mankind, he is not likely to offend many of his readers ; but when he sets up an individual error as a target to fire at, and takes a steady aim, he runs some risk of making himself enemies.

Now it so happens that I have been taking myself to task rather sharply, in a matter that is to my reproach ; and, possibly, I may be killing two birds with one stone, if I repeat to you the substance of what I have already said to myself. You see I take it for granted that you may be as faulty as I am.

But should it so happen that you are altogether free from error in this particular case, you may make my remarks useful in applying them to any other error into which you may have fallen. A man who has no wart on his finger, may have a

corn on his toe ; he may be all right in the head, yet be somewhat unsound in the heart ; he may be altogether free from one disease, and yet require a little medicine for another.

This last remark about medicine serves to remind me how often, in the course of my life, I have made a bitter draught more nauseous by pulling a wry face and increasing my antipathy against it, when by taking it cheerfully and unhesitatingly, I might have spared myself great annoyance. Do not you, on the present occasion, follow my bad example.

Notwithstanding the large sums of money which are sometimes collected by Christian congregations, and the instances that occur of individual liberality, there are few occasions on which niggardliness is more generally manifested than in collections for the support of the gospel. Without indulging in uncharitable remarks, common observation is enough to convince us of the fact, that to evade a collection, or to contribute to it the least possible sum that decency will admit, is a common practice among professedly Christian people.

This niggardly acknowledgment, or rather this practical denial, of our attachment to Divine things, is accompanied with so little consciousness of shame, that even disguise, in many cases, is

not resorted to: surely this infirmity ought to bring a blush on our cheeks.

When do any of us, in our pleasures, in our journeys, in our visits, in the reception of our friends, or in the purchase of any article of dress, make the same hesitation in the expenditure of a half-crown or a shilling, as we do in the case of a collection? And is, after all, the ever-blessed gospel of truth, with all its consolations for time, and its glorious hopes for eternity, a thing of so little consequence with us as to be weighed in the balances against a shilling? Christians! Christians! let us take the matter more to heart, and not thus acknowledge to ourselves, and proclaim to others, what a trifling value we put upon the gospel.

The celebrated Dr. Franklin, it is said, was once listening to a sermon when he expected there would be a collection. His mind, however, was made up not to give a single farthing. He had in his pocket at the time five pistoles in gold, three or four silver dollars, beside a handful of copper money.

As the minister proceeded in his discourse, the doctor began to relent, and thought to himself that he might as well part with his copper. Soon after this he was so much affected by what fell from the minister's lips, that he considered his

copper would be too small an offering ; his silver dollars were thus placed in a dangerous position. On went the minister, and in so eloquent and persuasive a manner, that by the time he had finished, the doctor was determined to do all he could for the cause which had been so ably advocated, so he poured into the collector's dish the contents of his pocket, copper money, silver dollars, and golden pistoles all together.

I cannot tell whether, in the instance I have related, Dr. Franklin was moved to act in the way he did because his judgment was convinced, or because his feelings were excited ; but this I do know, that both our judgment and our affections, too, ought to prompt us to support the cause of the gospel. Now let me come a little closer to you in my remarks.

Did you never, when preparing to set out for the house of God, in recollecting that a charity sermon, or a collection, was appointed for that day, suddenly feel an unusual desire to be profited by the ministry of some servant of the Most High, whom you had never heard, and who preached in a place of worship that you had never before entered ?

Did you never actually, on such an occasion, "go farther, and fare worse" than you would have done in hearing your own minister, returning

home more than half dissatisfied with yourself for the course you had taken ?

Did you never, after putting yourself to much inconvenience to avoid one collection, stumble upon another, giving your money grudgingly, and resolving never again to be caught by a trap of your own baiting ?

Did you never, after having made up your mind to give a certain sum, settle down into the prudential belief that half the amount would be more consistent with your circumstances ?

Did you never, after having been wrought up to unwonted liberality by the affectionate earnestness and pious fervour of a Christian minister, cool in your resolvings, approaching the plate shorn of your strength, and giving merely as another man ?

Did you never fumble in your pocket before a collection, holding in your hand a half-crown and a shilling, or a shilling and a sixpence, prepared to give the larger or the lesser coin at the door as circumstances might determine ?

Did you never give, to secure the good opinion of the plate-holder, what you would not have given to the advocated cause ? In one word, have you, or have you not, over and over again, given that gladly to a human being, which you would have given grudgingly to God ?

I am ashamed to propose such questions, and perhaps some of you would be equally ashamed honestly to answer them. Away then with all parsimonious pinching and contriving, fumbling and shuffling, grudging and withholding, in the Redeemer's cause. We have been mercifully dealt with: let us thankfully acknowledge that mercy, remembering that "the liberal soul deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand." God has been good to us; let us at least show that we set some value on his gifts: and as the glorious gospel has been freely given to us, freely let us support it.

ON FAVOURITE AUTHORS.

IT is said that a man is known by the company he keeps ; and I suppose, too, that a knowledge of the books a man is in the habit of reading would afford us some considerable insight into his character ; but this is a subject that I have no inclination at present to pursue.

Neither have I any intention to point out which are the best authors, nor to dwell on the difference between the books of modern writers and the works of those who wrote at a period more remote from our own. I merely mean to indulge in a homely remark or two, either general or particular, as the case may be, on a few of the many highly-gifted servants of God who, by their warm-hearted and holy-minded productions, have largely ministered to the profit and delight of mankind.

But let me not leave with you the impression that I have always, or generally, been occupied in pondering over the pages of religious books, for this would be inconsistent with truth. Too often

have I eaten husks when I might have banqueted on the fatted calf. My mental appetite ever has been, and is now, for a Christian man, too keen after character, and talent, and novelty ; and therefore, I will not seek to hide my infirmity ; but while I admit how much of interest I have taken in books of an ephemeral kind, let not my sincerity be doubted when I describe the dear delight that works of an opposite description have afforded me ; it is of the authors of such works that I am about to speak.

We have so many good books now, that we underrate their value ; had we but few, we should prize them above rubies. It is a glorious thing to be able to live and converse with the wise and good, who have so long been dead ; to hold communion, yea, familiarly to companionize with the mighty minds that diffused a glory over departed ages ; to ponder their works ; to approve their designs ; to mark their errors ; to profit by their wisdom ; to reverence their piety ; to love their benevolence ; to pay homage to their talents ; and unfeignedly to preserve and honour their memory.

To say nothing of the Book of books, the fountain of all others that are spiritually-minded, there are numberless tomes that bring us at once, as it were, into the presence of those who wrote them. I cannot tell you what I sometimes feel when in

the company of Bunyan and Baxter ; of Herbert ; of Brown of Haddington ; of Meikle, of Flavel, and Fletcher ; of Hall, and Hopkins, and Jeremy Taylor, and Leighton, and Usher ; of Whitefield, Wesley, and Watts ; of Henry and Scott ; of Boston, and Toplady, and Brooks. I seek no more than my neighbours the favour and the friendship of the ungodly great, but I do hold it an honour to touch the hem of a good man's garment. Some of these had lawn sleeves, and other some, for aught I know, might have linsey ; but however this might be, they all loved and served their heavenly Master, and their hearts were renewed by his grace. Is it nothing, think you, to be able to walk with Luther and Calvin, to talk with Wickliffe, and to take by the hand Cranmer and Ridley, and old father Latimer, bidding them God speed, and a prosperous journey as they enter their flaming chariots that are waiting to bear them to the skies ?

How much have we all been moulded by the pursuits of our earlier years ! In the days of my youth, I was fond of olden ballads, and tales of chivalry, and these called forth a love of enterprise and adventure, which clings to me still. Spenser was my delight, and to pore over old father Chaucer's antiquated volumes afforded me much gratification.

And did the magic of romantic lays
Seduce the leisure of my earlier days?
Did fancy spread her varied charms around,
And lead me wandering o'er enchanted ground?
Oh yes, and oft these transitory toys
Have flung a sunbeam on my passing joys.
And has the midnight taper wasted beer
In pondering legend hoar, and fairy scene?
Have idle fictions o'er my fancy stole,
And superstition's tale beguiled my soul?
They have, and spell'd by their mysterious power
Has roll'd away full many a rosy hour.
Farewell, ye tales of terror, that control
In mystic bonds the passions of the soul!
Ye fabled haunts, where fays and genii dwell,
And all ye legendary themes, farewell!
Your fleeting joys I freely now resign
For ever:—let the Book of Truth be mine.

There is an ardent interest awakened in the mind when reading a favourite author, that, at times, amounts to extreme impatience. I remember noticing something of this in the demeanour of a politician, who was reading the newspaper of the day; it seemed dangerous to approach him; he could not brook interruption.

Some read none but modern authors, while others go back to the ancient Greeks and Romans, and to Josephus, Joseph Ben Gorion, and Geoffrey of Monmouth, with delight. Some read nothing but prose, while others dote on the rugged

poetry of Robert of Gloucester, John Gower, and Andrew of Wynton, or ponder the pages of sir David Lindsay, sir Philip Sidney, and sir Walter Raleigh. I knew one Bible reader, who refused either to read worldly books, or to enter into worldly pleasure. His observation invariably was, "No, no ! I have had quite enough of Madam Bubble!"

Few writers have had more complete control over their readers than Foxe. His black letter "Acts and Monuments," partly arising from the interest of the subject treated on, partly from the style of the author, and partly from the arresting, old-fashioned illustrations of the burning of the martyrs, at once secures the attention of the reader. I have hung over the book with mysterious awe and pleasure till more than midnight, and, after all, closed it with strong reluctance. When the trumpet of the archangel shall summon all to judgment, how will the black hearts of the martyr-burning bigots tremble ! How will their blood-red hands be lifted up in hopeless supplication, should one half of the multiplied murders recorded in this book be laid to their charge !

The Reformers are favourite authors with Christian people, and the works of Wickliffe, Knox, Bradford, and Hooper, with those of Latimer, Ridley, and Cranmer, who suffered in the flames

at Oxford, are held in much estimation. If you really love the orthodox doctrines of the gospel set forth in clearness and simplicity, you cannot but highly value these works, and highly honour their authors.

Francis Quarles has been the delight of many ; his “Shepherd’s Oracles,” and his “Divine Fancies,” have their admirers ; but his “Book of Emblems” has been much more popular. It has given pleasure to my boyhood, my youth, and my years. Never, surely, were stranger pictures introduced into any volume since the art of engraving on wood was discovered, than those in the “Emblems ;” which he adopted from a mystical work written by a Romanist named Hugo : they form a necessary part of the volume. I do not ask you whether you have read Quarles, but take it for granted that you must have read, and heartily enjoyed him.

Beveridge is deservedly a favourite, and Richard Baxter, who declined a bishopric, still more so ; the “Private Thoughts upon Religion” of the one, and the “Call to the Unconverted” and “Saint’s Everlasting Rest” of the other, have been a means, under a heavenly influence, of showing to many the rags of their own fancied merit, and directing them to the robes of the all-sufficient righteousness of Christ. Neither Beveridge nor

Baxter, however, has had half so many readers or admirers as John Bunyan. His “Holy War” is full of interest; but his “Pilgrim’s Progress” is irresistible. Readers are becoming somewhat more reconciled than they were to the new and beautiful pictures which decorate the latter editions of this work, but at first it was a sad trouble to many. Old Humphrey was one of those who would not hear of the change. He had read the work, man and boy, with the old-fashioned pictures in it, and they, with all their uncouthness, had become dear to him. Well! well! he has lived long enough to give up many opinions that he once held, and to hold many humbly that he is not at all likely to change.

It would, perhaps, be difficult to find a young, or an old reader, who knows nothing of “Pilgrim’s Progress.” Christian, and Christiana, Hopeful, Mr. Greatheart, Faithful, Prudence, and Mercy, are names well known, and the City of Destruction, the Slough of Despond, the Wicket Gate, the Interpreter’s House, Doubting Castle, and Vanity Fair, together with the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and the Gate of the Celestial City, are familiar to most people. In this country the influence of “Pilgrim’s Progress” is, perhaps, greater than that of any other book, with the exception of the Bible.

Dr. Johnson playfully pushed away a little girl who had not read the "Pilgrim's Progress," saying, "Then I'll not give a farthing for you." This was not intended in unkindness, but would excite the child's attention to the book.

Flavel is another favourite: his book on "Providence," and his "Husbandry Spiritualized," are influential works. Then there is Hopkins, who wrote an Exposition on the Commandments and Lord's Prayer; and Hall, often called the British Seneca. The great variety of talent that the Father of mercies has bestowed on man is wonderful; would that it were always devoted to the glory of its Almighty Giver!

Most likely you are as intimate with James Meikle as I am; but if not, the sooner you get possession of his "Solitude Sweetened" the better. Read it; dwell upon, enjoy it, and get good from it; for if you can read it carefully without getting good from it, yours must be rather a peculiar case. Leighton, who wrote on Peter; and Horne, the author of the "Commentary on the Psalms," were no common men, nor were they possessed of common minds. Boston was an admirable writer; and where could you put your hands on sweeter books than those of Brooks's "Precious Remedies," and his "Mute Christian under the Smarting Rod?" Talk of a book being worth its

weight in gold ! What is gold, heaped up high, in point of real value, compared with works like these ?

Thus have I glanced at a few of the many Christian authors who have been favourites with the Christian public : but were all of them to be enumerated, the list would, indeed, be a long one. I have said nothing of living authors, though many of them live in my warmest affections. Whoever your favourite authors may be, you will find some advantage in observing this rule in reading them : —Let your object be to get good from them, rather than to detect evil in them. It is well that there are Christian readers with keen eyes, sharp intellects, and burning zeal for orthodoxy, otherwise religious books would be much more lax and faulty than they are : but it belongs not to the general reader to enter into a crusade against fine points, doubtful opinions, and disputed positions. Better, as I say, to try to get good from your author, than to detect evil in him.

The mistakes that Christian-hearted men make are, no doubt, many, even when they possess the very best of intentions. Some good men seem, to me, to make it a point in their books to say as little about faith, and as much about works, as possible, when all the while you read them you have no doubt at all that their works have sprung

from a lively faith in the Redeemer. Other good men, on the contrary, speak of nothing else but faith, when it is equally clear that such faith as theirs must have abounded in good works. The truth is, that good men, like worldly-minded men, have their hobbies, and they will ride them. When you fall in with a good man of this kind, booted and spurred, and ready mounted, let him have his ride. Never you mind either his boots, his spurs, or the nag in which he so much delighteth ; keep your eye and your heart on his better qualities—his humility, his faith, his patience, his love for his brother sinners, and his zeal for the Redeemer's glory.

The other day I was commenting, to my shame be it spoken, a little more garrulously than I ought to have done, on the peculiarities and infirmities of a good man, when a Christian friend at my elbow, whose eyes were as steadily fixed on his good qualities as mine were on his bad ones, said to me, placing his hand soothingly on my arm, “Never mind, Mr. Humphrey, never mind ; Samson had his weakness, and Solomon had his folly, but Samson was a strong man, and Solomon was a wise man, for all that.” I felt, indeed, reproved ; for it occurred to me, if I could say so much on the failings of so good a man, what

might not he say on the failings of Old Humphrey?

I have been looking over the works of two or three of the favourite authors of my boyish days, and find them so poor and meagre in comparison with the estimate I formed of them in my youth, that I marvel how I could ever have valued them so highly. The change, however, must be in myself; that which gives pleasure to boyhood is often little calculated to afford satisfaction to the man. While, then, we enjoy our favourite authors, it will be well if we grow more sober as we sink into years, gradually diminishing our lighter volumes, clinging closer to those which are more spiritually minded, and valuing more than ever that blessed book which has brought life and immortality to light, and from whence the excellencies of all other religious books are derived.

ON EXTREMES.

HAD I only attended to one half of the rules which I have ventured to lay down in various cases for the guidance of others, how carefully, how creditably, and how exemplarily might I have walked through the world! But we are more disposed to give advice than to take it; and it is easier to lay down good plans for our own guidance than to carry them into effect with uniform steadiness and perseverance. A word with you now on the subject of extremes.

Instead of talking learnedly about Scylla and Charybdis, I will say in more homely language, that in avoiding the watery ditch on one side the road, we often run into the muddy quagmire on the other. Now it is but a sorry source of comfort when a man considers that he has escaped falling into one puddle up to his knees, by getting into another up to his neck. Avoid extremes! There is a golden mean that we shall all do well to attain. Though we need not fear being too humble, too honest, too sincere, or too eager after

heaven, yet, in a thousand things, we may err by carrying matters to excess.

There are few who run into the extreme of abstinence in eating, drinking, and sleeping ; though many grievously err in the opposite excess of gluttony, drunkenness, and sloth. Instances, however, of all kinds of extremes do occur. I knew a man who almost killed himself by an excess of abstinence ; and another, a clergyman, who attributed his ill state of health to the circumstance of his lying so much in bed, though it was a rare case for him not to rise before four o'clock in the morning.

Gravity and mirth are both good in their way ; but that which in one degree may be an advantage, may, in another, be an evil. Neither excessive gravity nor excessive mirth is suited to man. Excessive gravity would rob him of the energy of action, and excessive mirth would unfit him for salutary thought. My advice is, that you neither go scowling through the world like a screech-owl, nor grinning like a monkey.

With stedfast mind partake life's sweets and sours,
And neither grin nor growl away thy hours.

Prodigality and parsimony are evils ; the one being the excess of spending and bestowing, the other the excess of laying up and withholding.

For my part, I hardly know which is most to be pitied and despised — the poor prodigal who wastes his goods, or the avaricious man who denies himself and others the comforts of existence. Did the prodigal and the parsimonious know how much good might be done by a well-spent penny, they would neither give away uselessly, nor begrudge hard-heartedly. Whether rich or poor, try to keep up a prudent and a liberal spirit, neither scattering as a spendthrift, nor amassing as a miser.

Treat not as dross the goodly gifts of Heaven,
Nor hold too hard what God has freely given.

Thoughtlessness and care are extremes that ought to be avoided. Let us neither tempt God by despising his gifts, nor dishonour him by distrusting his goodness. There is enough of pain, poverty, sorrow, and sin in the world to call forth reflection and prudence; and there are far too many proofs of our heavenly Father's care for us, to warrant unreasonable anxiety for ourselves. Neither pass away life with reckless indifference, nor waste it in gloomy apprehensions of evil.

With prudent forethought let thy paths be trod,
And fearlessly commit thy ways to God.

There are those who make haste to be rich,

adding, at all hazards, field to field, house to house, and barn to barn ; and there are, also, who, by imprudence, are industrious in attaining poverty. A wise man will strive to shun, and a good man will struggle to avoid the snares that lie in the extremes of riches and poverty. Agur saw these snares, and urgently put up the prayer, “ Give me neither poverty nor riches ; feed me with food convenient for me : lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord ? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain,” Prov. xxx. 8, 9. If you desire a smooth path on earth, and a bright prospect of heaven, be thankful that your lot is not cast in the extremes of riches and poverty :

Let neither needless penury be thy rod,
Nor useless treasures lure thee from thy God.

Some have the gift of speech, and indulge it to such a degree that they will run on by the hour in conversation, scarcely allowing those around them to interrupt the current of their discourse. Others are habitually so silent, that drawing an observation from them is like extracting a tight cork from the narrow neck of a bottle. Talkativeness and taciturnity are extremes which are not to be commended : of the two, however, I prefer the latter ; for talking too much is certainly a greater

fault than talking too little. If you wish to render yourself useful and agreeable to your friends, you will neither chatter like a parrot, nor sit dumb as though the gift of speech were denied you :

A man of wisdom tempers well his tongue,
Nor talks too loud, too rapid, nor too long.

Severity and weak indulgence are failings that cling closely to parents, though the latter is more common than the former. At times, these excesses are found in the same person, who at one season excuses great faults, and at another sternly reproves trivial errors. Parents ! be on your guard ; for what father can hope that his child can love him, if he snaps him up sharply on the least occasion ; and what mother can expect a child to honour her in age, who is allowed to make faces at a bald head ? Be kind-hearted, and reprove evil ; but be neither weakly nor wickedly indulgent or severe :

Be neither swift to censure, weakly blind,
Unjustly cruel, nor absurdly kind.

Credulity and scepticism are sad errors ; for the one will weakly believe what is false, and the other will wilfully doubt what is true. To give credit to every idle report, or to call in question

what knowledge and experience have proved, is equally to manifest a want of wisdom. I know those who believe it to be an ill omen to see a solitary magpie ; and I also know those who doubt the eternal truths of God's most holy word :

Extremes indulged are certain to grow strong,
Weakness and wilfulness must both be wrong.

Sharpness and excessive softness in conversation are extremes attended with great disadvantage ; the former being disliked, and the latter being always suspected. A friend of mine, the other day, describing two characters, said of them, “ The one is as sharp as fresh-gathered mustard, the other is a dear oily man ; both together they would make an excellent salad : ”

Sharp words and soft deceit show want of sense ;
Let truth be told, but still without offence.

Extremes in dress and appearance, though not so objectionable, are still more apparent than extremes in manners. One man wears a very low hat, with a broad brim ; another has one high in the crown, with hardly any brim at all. One wears shoes three inches broad at the toe ; another has boots whose points are sharp and turning up somewhat in the style of a Turkish slipper. One man shaves himself clean, and has his hair

clipped unreasonably close ; another lets his hair grow long on his head, his neck, and his face. One man takes out with him a thin cane, that can neither defend him nor sustain his weight ; another carries a thick cudgel, as though he were about to beat a buffalo. There is hardly any end to excesses and extremes among mankind :

In word and deed, in manners and in dress,
Be ever modest, and avoid excess.

I might lay before you a catalogue of extremes, and one way of increasing its length would be to add thereto the list of my own excesses ; but enough has been said, perhaps, to set you to work to discover the extremes into which you yourselves most commonly run, in order that they may be corrected. In this undertaking, you will do well to remember that kindly feelings are no security against excess ; nay, very often, they are the very cause of creating it. Prudence and self-denial are gifts worth praying for ; with their assistance, you may weather the storm of many temptations, but without them you may be shipwrecked in a sea of good intentions.

Let me advise you to seek not to discourage the remarks of those kind friends who faithfully reprove you. A friend of mine observes, "That man is not fit for this world, who is not thankful

to have his faults detected, and his improvement thus promoted."

With a wise distrust of our own powers, and a strong reliance on Divine goodness and mercy, we may work wonders, or rather, wonders may be worked in us, restraining us from excesses and extremes that set thorns and briers in our early paths, and becloud our view of heaven :

May grace Divine, with bright effulgent beams,
Shine forth and scatter all our strange extremes.

ON CHARACTER

THERE are many people who find much gratification in observing the words and actions of others. Wherever they are, whatever they see and hear, and with whomsoever they associate, they are always on the look out for those peculiarities that constitute character. You shall have a few of my characters: they are oddly tumbled together; but you may pick out, here and there, what may prove to be seasonable information.

There are weak-minded and feeble-bodied invalids, who are never well, and who never would be well if they could. The doctor must call, the draught must be taken, and every friend must tell them, on pain of serious displeasure, that they look very ill, and must take great care of themselves. I have met with a few of these.

There are quiet folks in the world, who let others have their way, who sit and laugh in their sleeves at the wilfulness of others, and withal get pitied and pelted into the bargain. This class is somewhat scarce; but it has come within the range of my observation.

There are ignorant, hot-headed, high-minded hurley-burley blusterers, who tyrannize wherever they have power. To rail at servants, to look big, and call about them at inns and other places, and to quarrel with the feeble and timorous, is their delight.

There are tattling gad-abouts, who can no more withhold from the whole neighbourhood anything they may happen to know or hear, than a cackling hen that has just laid an egg. Be it true or false, let it do good or evil, the story must be told. Sorry am I to say, that the tribe of the gad-abouts is a numerous one.

There are kind-hearted souls, who can never be happy themselves, unless they can make others so. Half-a-dozen such as these in a village, and a score in a town, do more real good, and fling around them more sunshine, than a hundred merely respectable inhabitants. Oh how I love to fall in with beings of this description !

There are free givers, who have not a particle of charity. They will head a subscription, visit a benevolent institution, put largely in the plate at the church or chapel door, and plead the cause of the widow and the orphan. These things are done "that they may be seen of men," and "verily they have their reward."

There are passionate persons, so hot and pep-

pery, so truly combustible, that a word will throw them into a blaze. Whether the offence be small or great, intended or accidental, it is all one. They are like loaded guns, which go off when the least thing touches the trigger. Of one of this class it was aptly said,

“ He carries in his breast a spark of ire,
That any fool may fan into a fire.”

There are thoughtful men who remain at home, and grow wise ; and there are thoughtless wanderers who go abroad, and come back ignorant. It is not what the eye sees, but what the mind reflects on, that supplies us with wisdom.

There are persons who, acting from sudden impulses, make use of such high-flown exclamations on trifling occasions, that they have no suitable words for occurrences of importance. They know nothing of the positive and comparative, but always make use of the superlative. The squeaking of a mouse and the fall of a church-spire would call forth the same ejaculation. The offenders of this class are usually feminine.

There are indolent indulgers of themselves, so lethargic that they can make no effort, except on occasions of extraordinary necessity, like the glutton that gorges himself to supply his hunger, and then relapses into his accustomed torpidity.

There are busybodies, whose own business seems not to be of half so much importance to them as the occupations of others. These sift trifling matters to the bottom; make much of little things, and do a plentiful deal of mischief to all around them. They gain the credit of knowing every body and every thing. Some court them, some fear them, and some despise them; but every one dislikes them.

There are susceptible, affectionate, and impulsive spirits, who quickly manifest their kind-hearted feelings, but do not retain them. Like the spark that gives a momentary warmth and brightness, and is suddenly extinguished, their emotions come and go with the occasion that calls them forth. With many of this class have I held communion.

There are well-meaning, weak-minded simpletons, who cannot say, No! but agree in every thing with every body; such sentences as these are ever in their mouths: "You are right, sir!" "True! true! true!" "Exactly so!" "It cannot be otherwise!" "Undoubtedly!" "To be sure it is!" "That is what I say!" "There is no question about the matter!" "I see! I see!"

There are silent and reflecting observers of men and things, who commonly hear and see,

and say nothing. They neither approve nor condemn audibly, and many imagine that they have no opinion ; yet there are times when they can speak. When you meet with such an one, hold him, and let him not go ; for he is worth his weight in gold.

There are speakers fond of fine words ; they are so self-sufficient and ill-instructed as to confound simple language with a deficiency of intellect, thereby undervaluing what is really an attainment of a high order, and only to be acquired by much study and practice. Students of this kind abound.

There are thankless repiners, who always remember to complain of the least of their troubles, and always forget to rejoice and thank God for the boundless blessings he has so liberally bestowed. A thankless spirit is a curse to its possessor.

There are true cocoa-nut friends, who with a rough outside possess great kindness of heart. These speak rather with their hands than their tongues ; with their deeds than with their words. If you have such a friend value him ; for you may go far, and not find another.

There are polished and plausible persons, who have ever fair words at their disposal. They promise freely, but perform slowly. There is a silky

softness in their persuasions, that ill-prepares you for disappointment. Have a care, my friends; the velvet-like paw of a cat conceals talons that are dangerous.

There are rude, unmannerly guzzlers, who take a pride in making themselves at home wherever they go, to the great annoyance of all who are not of the same stamp with them. They who show no respect to others, are utterly undeserving of it themselves.

There are hard-hearted, callous-minded, money-getting, mammon-clutchers, on whom a tale of distress has no more effect than a ball has on the stone wall against which it is thrown. Where the soul is absorbed in getting, the heart has little pleasure in giving. These mammon-clutchers form a large family.

There are habitual and industrious Bible-readers, who set a value on the word of God above all earthly things. It is a stronghold where they go for safety; a treasure-house where they obtain riches, and a never-failing source of wisdom, encouragement, doctrine, reproof, and correction in righteousness. If you know any of this class, keep up your acquaintance with them.

There are poetical sentimentalists, who revel in the beauties of creation, and prefer worshipping God in the green fields on the sabbath, to meet-

ing in his house with his people. Their sentiment may be fine, and their poetry excellent; but their piety is of a very doubtful character. If we truly love God, we truly desire, whatever may be our infirmities, to obey God, “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,” according to his word.

There are proud and supercilious sceptics, who affect to pity simple-minded Christians, preferring pride and destruction to humility and peace. They feed on husks, and refuse the fatted calf; they sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind; and they live without the hope of eternal life, and lay up thorns for a dying pillow. I am afraid that the number of this class is on the increase.

There are mercy-loving men, who practise kindness to man and beast, and refrain from treading on a creeping thing. Mercy is a glorious attribute! freely have we received of it, freely let us bestow it. A friend of this sort, in a shadowy hour, is as balm to a rankling wound.

There are ill-natured and imperious churls, who are more willingly employed in giving pain than in imparting pleasure. They have no bowels of compassion, tenderness, and mercy; but love to reprove, to condemn, to afflict, and oppress: “The instruments of the churl are evil,” Isa. xxxii. 7.

There are compassionate spirits, whose charity

is without judgment ; the semblance of woe is enough to call forth their pity. With them an impostor in rags is always more successful than a poor woman decently clad, or a distressed man in a whole coat. I have half-a-dozen people in my eye while I make this remark.

There are unstable, whining, weak-headed changelings, who are not to-day what they were yesterday, nor will they be to-morrow what they are to-day. As well may you desire the weather-cock on the church steeple to keep to one point, as expect them to be steady in their purposes. The less you have to do with friends of this kind the better.

There are narrow-minded men, ay, and women too, who have humanity enough to do a deed of kindness, but not generosity enough to abstain from upbraiding the receiver of it. With one hand they give, with the other they smite. You never hear the last of any act they perform. For a pennyworth of goodwill they exact a pound's worth of acknowledgments. Their little drops of honey are mingled with much wormwood and gall.

There are grateful spirits that, come good or ill, are always "singing of mercy." To them the heavens declare the glory of God, and the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. A spirit of this kind is worth a sea full of sapphires !

There are prating old men, who talk much about themselves: often are they grave when they should be gay; frequently do they give advice to their neighbours abroad, while they stand in need of it at home; and continually, while they appear to others as strong, wise, and good, do they feel themselves to be weak, ignorant, and sinful. Come, come, I have hit at last upon something so much like my own character, that I must stop a while, and muse upon it. If any thing that I have brought forward is suitable to your case; if, in this budget of odds and ends, you should find a cap that will fit you, put it on and wear it a while for the sake of Old Humphrey.

ON TERMS USED IN WAR.

WHAT a continual holiday of the heart, what an unceasing jubilee of the spirit would it be, if mankind would always dwell together in peace and love ! But the time is not yet. While sin is alive, sorrow will never die ; and, therefore, though our paths are thronged with countless mercies, we must not expect them to abound with thornless flowers.

That it is an advantage, nay a duty, to look on the sunny side of things is clear ; and yet there are so many sources of grief and distress, that a thinking man can hardly avoid, now and then, walking in the shade, afflicting himself with regret, and shrouding his spirit with melancholy reflections.

I was musing, the other day, on the many forms of expression that we meet with, and read over, without emotion, as things of course, though they involve every thing that is dreadful to human nature. Among them I was calling to mind some of the phrases which are used in reference

to war. There is, in many of these, such a brevity and careless ease, that we hardly seem required to pause upon them. "The troops were driven into the river." "The town was taken by storm." "The garrison were put to the sword." "The city was given up to pillage." "The place was burned to the ground." These light and tripping phrases are common-place in military despatches ; and yet, what fearful excesses, what dreadful sufferings they involve ! .

Let us take one of them, and for a moment examine it in a few of its ramifications. True it is, that we are now at peace ; but a calm is often succeeded by an unexpected storm, and the quietude of Vesuvius is followed by the loud bellowing of the burning mountain. Peace and war depend much on the public mind, and of that public we all form a part ; it may be well, therefore, to keep alive within us that hatred of war, which a review of its cruel excesses is calculated to inspire. Let us take, for our examination, the expression, "The city was given up to pillage." Those who have read much of scenes of warfare, well know that imagination is not likely to exceed the reality of the miseries which war has generally produced. The narratives of Labaume and Porter, Wilson, Segur, Dufens, and others, bring to our view such extravagant scenes of calamity

and cruelty, such displays of horrible enormity, that we wonder why mankind do not, with one united and universal cry of abhorrence, exclaim against the practice and principle of heart-hardening and demoralizing war.

But let it not be thought that I have any pleasure in blackening the reputation of a soldier ; neither would I presumptuously brand the brow of him who differs with me in opinion ; but feeling, as I do, that the word of God is the word of peace, and that war is a bitter evil ; and knowing, as I do, how thoughtlessly we receive and retain the opinion of those around us, right or wrong, I claim the liberty of free speech, while I endeavour to excite more consideration and sympathy among the advocates of war, than is usually manifested by them.

“The city was given up to pillage.” What is the real meaning of the term, Giving up a place to pillage ? for it explains itself so little, that it may be worth while, for once, if it be only for the sake of impressing it on our memories, to make ourselves familiar with the signification, as explained by past experience. It means, then, neither more nor less than this, that an infuriated soldiery are given free leave and liberty to indulge, without restraint, their selfish, brutal, and cruel passions, in plundering, burning, and de-

stroying the property of unoffending people ; and in ill-using, maiming, and murdering them without control. This is the plain meaning, so far as we can gather it from the most authentic records of the occurrences which have taken place in cases of the kind. Indeed, it must be so ; for, in giving armed and revengeful soldiers permission to pillage, you give them leave to take, by force, the property of those who, naturally enough, will make a struggle to retain it : the consequences are inevitable, and strife is succeeded by blood-shed. How fearful, then, is the expression, “The city was given up to pillage !”

The enormity of giving up a city to pillage is not seen or felt, when we read of it as taking place in a distant part of the world ; it comes not home “to our business and bosoms,” as it would do, were the occurrence to take place under our observation ; but rapine and murder are crimes wherever they are practised, and pain and heart-rending calamity are as hard to endure in one part of the world as in another.

“The city was given up to pillage.” There can be no harm in applying this expression for the moment to the immediate town or city in which we dwell ; the place wherein we possess property, and where those live who are dear to us, as the ruddy drops that warm our hearts ; and here let no one

accuse me of wantonly harrowing up human feelings. Let no man tell me that I do wrong in painting war in its own sanguinary colours ! I am persuaded it is because Christians have been guiltily silent, as to war's abominations, that so little repugnance is felt against strife and bloodshed. To shrink from a painted battle is affectation, if we have no antipathy to a real one ! Surely, if a monster affright us not, we should not be scared at his shadow ! What I have read of the pages of warfare has wrung from my very spirit a strong sympathy for the victims of violence, and called forth an urgent and irresistible desire to excite the same sympathy in others. Let me, then, pursue my course.

For a moment, let me suppose the roaring cannon to have brought down our church spires ; to have broken in the walls and roofs of our habitations ; and that bomb shells, Shrapnell shells, and Congreve rockets have set buildings without number on fire, and spread confusion around. All at once the thundering of the cannon ceases ; the bombs and rockets are no longer seen in the air, and a new and more dreadful plague spreads abroad. Wild and savage yells are heard, with the rattle of iron hoofs, and trampling of hurried feet. Bands of armed men, on foot and on horseback, burst in, like a resistless torrent, among us.

Doors are smashed, windows broken. Here, soldiers broach or stave in the casks ! there, others drain the jugs or the bottles, till, fired with brutal passions, drunkenness, revenge, and fury, they wallow in pollution, and deal around them desolation and death.

Household furniture is destroyed. Cabinets, bureaux, and boxes are broken to pieces. Jewels, money, curiosities, and clothing are huddled together, to be carried away. Paintings are rent, sculpture mutilated, inscriptions defaced, and family records, love-tokens, and gifts of friendship are torn, trampled, and burned. Oaths and blasphemies resound, riot and debauchery are everywhere seen, with the wildest forms of cruelty and death.

A father has borne all, grinding his teeth in agony ! He has seen the wreck of his property, the destruction of his worldly goods ; but, when the lawless hand of the ruffian soldier lays hold on his family, he can bear no more : starting up in their defence, and seemingly with more than mortal energy, he attacks his enemies. It is in vain ! a dozen bayonets bear him to the ground ; and while he draws his last gasp, his life welling from his wounds, he drinks in the agonizing shrieks of those who are dearest to him, calling uselessly for his aid.

His wife struggles hopelessly, in the savage grasp of the abandoned ruffians, to preserve her babe. Alas ! it is wantonly slaughtered, and mother and child lie bleeding on the ground ; while the cruel jests, and mad merriments of their hard-hearted murderers, echo through the desolated mansion. One would think that the boldest advocate for war could not look on this case as his own, without being struck with its enormity.

Nor is this a solitary scene. The same demon-like career is carried on throughout the city,—for the place “is given up to pillage ;” mercy is exiled, and neither youth, beauty, wisdom, age, the infant, nor the hoary-headed, meet with compassion. Rapine, brutality, murder, and conflagration are abroad.

Reader, this is the meaning of a city “being given up to pillage !” Are you not called on then to resist, with every power you possess, that spirit of warfare which tolerates such enormities ? Ought you not to bear testimony against it, leaving it on record to your children, and children’s children, to do the same ?

Have you a son in whom you delight, and does he thirstily drink in, as water, the lessons of instruction you bestow ? Are desires gathering in his heaving breast ; and hope, and enterprise, and expectation visible in his brightening eye ?

It remains with you—I speak with due reverence to the Most High—whether he, by sharing such excesses as have been described, shall become a scourge to mankind ; or, by the practice of virtue and humanity, be an ornament and a blessing to his race.

Have you a daughter, who is your joy and your glory? whose gentleness, tenderness, and affection are to influence, in future years, the more rugged heart of man? It remains with you whether your child, by encouraging in others the selfish dreams of ambition and pride, shall strengthen the ranks of war, and spread around desolation and death; or, by the exercise of persuasion, kindness, and mercy, prove the gentle advocate and influential promoter of peace.

Blame me not for pressing this matter on your thoughts, but rather give it the consideration it deserves. Be convinced, and try to convince others, that the only way to avoid the evils of war is to drink in the spirit of the gospel, and with earnestness, truth, and sincerity, to “ follow after the things which make for peace,” Rom. xiv. 19.

ON ASSOCIATIONS.

THOUGH it be a good thing to be plain and practical in making remarks, at times it is pleasant to indulge in imagination. However excellent a joint may be, very few people would like to sit down to it every day of the year. Whether the banquet be substantial or ideal, in either case variety is a pleasant appendage.

It is well known that the pleasure or pain we derive from many things, is altogether dependent on the associations we attach to them. Some people are more imaginative and susceptible than others. In my own case, there is hardly a sight meets my eye, or a sound salutes my ear, without bringing with it a train of associations. If you can look me tamely in the face, and ask me what I mean when I speak of associations, it is not to you that I now speak. To such of my readers only as fully comprehend my meaning the following observations are addressed.

Oh, what a goodly hoard of secret, silent, and sweet enjoyment has the susceptible and grateful

heart all to itself! When about to revel in the pleasures of association, it knows not where to begin, or how to end. I am just now in the mood to indulge my thoughts in my own wild way ; and if I am too wild, if a thoughtless step should bear me beyond the boundary within which a pilgrim should walk, a reproving glance will be sufficient to bring me back again, silent, sorrowful, and grateful for the timely warning. Not willingly in my thoughts will I run into error. Riches shall not make me covetous or servile in my mental musing, nor creation's beauty lure me to idolatry. Gold shall not become my hope, nor fine gold my confidence ; neither when the sun shineth, or the moon walketh in brightness, shall my heart willingly be enticed, or my hand in homage be kissed by my mouth.

I am about to put down a few of my associations. Egotist as I am, who will care for them ? This is a question that I cannot answer ; but as I care much for the associations of others, let me imagine that some few will care for mine. It may be, that while I appear to be drawing only on my own mind and memory, I may in reality be also calling forth the mental resources of my friends.

I have strange, yet pleasing, associations with many trifling things, such as the smell of a cedar pencil, a nasturtian flower, writing paper, and

indian rubber ; the sight of a cocoa nut, and old china jar, a guinea fowl, a camel's hair pencil, and a box of water colours, and the taste of a walnut and a tamarind. These associations, however, are indefinite and undefined ; I will speak of some that are more intelligible.

A rainbow is rich in association. When I think of one, it is with me a dull, dark, drenching day ; care sits on my brow, and sadness in my heart ; my soul is cast down, and my spirit is disquieted within me. The sun breaks forth suddenly, mine eyes are lifted up, and a glorious rainbow is in the skies ; my care is scattered to the winds, my sadness is dispersed, and the bow is not set in the clouds of heaven only, but in my heart.

I have vivid, though somewhat melancholy associations with an ivy leaf. An arbour comes before me covered with ivy leaves, fluttering and dancing in the breeze. Tall and stately wild lilies are growing near. A lovely face looks up to laugh at the dancing ivy leaves. Will that face never again shine upon me but in memory and associations ? Never, till this mortal shall have put on immortality. There is a green hillock in an isle of the ocean, and she that sat in the bower lies pale beneath it ; but she died in the faith, and has entered, I have no doubt, into the rest prepared for the people of God.

The sight of sealing-wax is influential ; it reminds me of a store of mottoes, “Dinna forget,” and “Gen. xxxi. 49,” among them ; and it sets before me a crystal seal, picked up in the rude stone on Mont Blanc, engraved with my initials at Rome, and set in gold in London.

The sound of a flute, or the sight of a shining, low-crowned, broad-brimmed, sailor-like hat, brings before me a mild and thoughtful countenance, and gentle, expressive eyes that look kindly on me. A clear, rich-toned voice tells of wild scenery in distant lands—rocks and caverns, and midnight adventurous excursions. And then comes a throng of sunny scenes and sunny faces, but the spirits that animated some of them are now beyond the stars. I must soon follow ; oh, let me hear the cheering appeal, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,” Rev. ii: 10.

The name of Nancy conjures up to my sight a ship that bore that name. There is one on board her that was the friend of my boyhood ; we roamed the same path, climbed the same tree, sat at the same table, and slept in the same bed. The storm is abroad, the ship is a thousand miles from land, and not sea-worthy. Her sails are torn, her masts are gone by the board, her bulwarks and her bows are broken. The Nancy is

among the “missing,” and how, and when, and where she sank through the cold, dark waters, is known only to Him that knoweth all things.

The purple heath-flower is associated with a moor and a mountain, a cairn and a cromlech, a sweet cottage, by-gone seasons of joy, a bookcase ornamented with trellis-work of brass wire, the portrait of a bard, the sound of a piano ; a youthful face, with soft and influential eyes ; talent, worth, and kindness. Hark ! the dissonance of a rail-road is dispelling the association, and smoky clouds from steam-engines are blackening the air.

A loud explosion is fearfully eloquent in my ears, and recalls a dreadful scene. I hurry to the spot. A house is involved in smoke, the roof is blown off ; the walls are burst asunder, a dozen wounded sufferers are mingled in the wide-spread ruin, and among them a friend is stretched dead at my feet, with a blackened corpse beside him. Wait ! watch ! be ready ! “for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh,” Matt. xxiv. 44.

The long-legged, long-necked heron has splendid associations. I am in front of a magnificent palace. Dense masses of soldiery are drawn up in imposing array ; guards, cuirassiers, and lancers glitter in the sun. Generals and field-marshals, in the gorgeous trappings of military attire, are passing to and fro on proud and prancing charg-

ers. Princes, dukes, and ambassadors from crowned heads, are assembled in costly carriages, with sumptuous equipages ; tens of thousands of spectators are pressing forwards to gaze on the glowing spectacle, and Britain's queen, right royally arrayed, drawn by eight matchless steeds, is on her way to her coronation. Above the throng a heron is majestically soaring and sailing round and round, a thousand feet in the air.

A common brier is associated with shade and shine, with pain and pleasure. It is bound round the sods of a new-made grave which I have visited at midnight in all the unreasonableness and rebellion of grief that refuses to be comforted. The stars are high in heaven, and silence has spread her mantle on the resting-place of the dead. I could almost in my frenzied sorrow, tear the beloved one from the grave. A change has come over me : an arrow from the Holy One has reached my heart, a convulsive sob has escaped me, my eyes are streaming, my unreasonableness and rebellion are gone ; and as a chastened child, with an humbled heart, repenting, adoring, and praising, I leave the place.

A sere leaf is closely connected with forest scenery. I am walking in the woods, my feet deep in the dry, rustling, ruddy leaves thickly scattered on the ground. The winds are up, and

the giant trees are waging battle with their huge, and agitated arms. My feelings are excited, my heart is happy, and my spirit grateful.

The word “eternity” is clothed with heart thrilling recollections. I am sitting in the house of God with a goodly throng of fellow-worshippers. Prayers have been offered, and sacred psalmody has rung around the echoing roof and walls. The minister of grace to guilty men is standing up high in the pulpit, fixing his eyes on vacancy as though he could see beyond the narrow limits of the earth, and pronouncing with energy and earnestness the words, “Millions of ages crowding on millions of ages ; millions of ages crowding on millions of ages ; and again, millions of ages crowding on millions of ages, are but the beginning of eternity !”

Thus might I prate, without intermission, of my own associations, without any of them claiming kindred with yours. No doubt, however, you have associations, and they may be of a calmer character than those I have enumerated. May such be our thoughts, meditations and associations, that they may serve, in some measure, to dispel the gloom of earth, and increase our desires for the glory of heaven !

ON OUTSIDE SHOW.

THINGS are not what they seem ! There is an outward show that, in some cases, dazzles our sight, and in others, deceives our judgment. That which promises much, frequently yields but little, while that which has been undervalued, is often abundantly productive :

The bitterest herb that grows upon the mountain,
Some grateful perfume on the gale may fling ;
The welling stream of a neglected fountain,
Some healing life-preserving power may bring.

Whatever may be the outward words and deeds, there is so much that is deceptive hidden beneath them, that we know at the very best, but a part of the truth ; I sometimes think, that the best and the worst deeds of men are yet unchronicled. The men who have forfeited their lives at the gallows amid the execrations of the crowd, and those who have been effigied in marble, calling forth the grateful admiration of mankind, may have been transcendently surpassed in villainy, or

virtue, by hundreds whose names the dust of oblivion has rendered illegible for ever.

I have, before, had occasion to say, “that could we see the weakness of the strong, the ignorance of the learned, the cowardice of the brave, and the folly of the wise; could we only discern the passions and motives that influence the worst, ay, and the best of men, from hour to hour, from day to day, and from year to year, we should be compelled to regard every man as wearing a mask, and concealing thereby the real features of his mind.”

It is a truth, that we hide more than we reveal; but God sees through all our disguises, “for his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings,” Job xxxiv. 21. “The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart,” 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

One might imagine that the very knowledge of ourselves would go far to defend us from being led away by the outside of things. How often do we stifle our emotions, trying to appear happy when our hearts are near bursting; and affecting calmness when strong passion, burning in our veins, is clamorous to break forth like a torrent. There is much in the fiery volcano that resembles the hidden feelings of the human heart. Vesu-

vius may be quiet outwardly, while turbulence is burning within. We may be unconscious of danger, when, all at once, the rumbling earthquake is heard and felt. The smoke bursts into a flame, hot stones and cinders are hurled into the air, and, amid the bellowing thunder, a flood of molten earth and minerals rushes down from the summit of the fiery mountain, spreading desolation around.

Again, I say, things are not what they seem. We learn, in our very childhood, that the cat's velvet paw is not talonless ; that the blackberry grows on a brier ; that the blooming bud is often cankered at its heart ; that the shining bubble bursts while it glitters in the sun ; and that the sparkling firework ends only in darkness ; and yet, in after years, we suffer ourselves to be deceived by appearances almost as much as ever.

It seems a sort of principle, among mankind, to appear other than they are. Many who are ill, scrupulously hide their infirmities ; while others, who are well, affect to be out of health. There are rich people who try to appear poor, and hundreds of poor people who endeavour to pass themselves off as very rich. Some keep back the truth out of kindness to the feelings of others. Some make mountains of mole-hills, or mole-hills of mountains, so serve themselves or their

friends ; and thousands are, in their minds, bodies, and estates, just the reverse of what their appearance sets forth. Motives may be, yea, doubtless are, different in different cases, yet still it is not the less true, that the world is a masquerade wherein one character is always deceiving another. It was so of olden time, it is so now, and is likely to remain so. Oh for a spirit of sincerity one towards another ! Oh for a hearty and unbounded confidence in Him who deceiveth not, but is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Then, again, we are so shortsighted, that we are continually taking evil for good, and good for evil. When Joseph was stripped of his coat, his coat of many colours, when he was cast into the pit and sold to the Ishmaelites, it seemed, no doubt, a rugged path that he was treading, whereas it was the very highway to the favour of Pharaoh. When Haman erected a gallows, fifty cubits high, he was misled by appearances ; he saw, by anticipation, Mordecai hanging thereon : but his gallows was the instrument of his own destruction.

Who would have thought that an armed giant, the weight of whose coat of mail was five thousand shekels of brass, and whose spear-staff was like a weaver's beam, could have been brought to the ground with a pebble-stone ? or that the waters of the brook Jordan would be more healing in their in-

fluences than those of Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus? Yet these things were so, and stranger things than these have happened.

Once more, I say, things are not what they seem: some things are underrated, while others are too highly prized. Samson the strong, saw not in the fair face of his Delilah deceit, treachery, bondage, cruelty, and death; nor did the learned Rabbins of the Jews discern in the fleshly form of the "Man of sorrows," the Lord of life and glory. They were misled by outward appearances. Cain thought, that because the presence of Abel was a trouble to him, his absence would give him ease; but oh, what a mark was branded on his brow, and what a load of sorrow was laid on his heart, by the violent deed he committed!

The mighty have been deceived by outside show as much as the mean. The Alexanders and the Cæsars of old had thorns enough in their paths; and the sultans and emperors of more modern times have seldom found the couch of royalty to be a bed of down. The outward splendour of a throne, and the phantom of glory, dazzled their eyes, and they saw not the disappointments and the disquietudes that awaited them; the dagger, the bow-string, and the poisoned bowl dogged their paths. How few, if any, of the heroes of the world have died the death of

the righteous, and found their last end like his! Look on the minion of ambition, the mighty Napoleon, striding the narrow world like a Colossus! See him at the head of his armies, spurring onward his war-horse, hot after victory, and impatient for renown! But what avail his braying trumpets, his golden eagles, his unfurled banners, and his battle array? Does he gather in that harvest of glory which ambition promised to the sickles of his soldiery? Let the poor handful of captive earth that was shrouded at St. Helena, and which now lies unconscious of the pomp that surrounds it on the banks of the Seine, give the reply.

What a mockery is the “bubble reputation,” when the breath of the ever-changing multitude is necessary to keep it in the air!

But it is not with the high and the mighty that I have to do. Things are not what they seem in common life. A conviction of this fact, brought home to our hearts, may be practically useful. The benighted traveller, weary with his wanderings, and bewildered with the mists and darkness around him, hastens to the distant light, which he fondly dreams to emanate from some hospitable hearth. Already, in imagination, he partakes of the friendly glow! It is but one more effort that is necessary, and then his wants

will be supplied, and his fears dispelled. Alas! when in the act of realizing all his hopes, he flounders in the mire, into which the wandering wildfire of the marsh has allured him. Common-place as this illustration may be, it is "faithful to a fault," in setting forth the mistakes of hundreds when afflicted in mind, in body, or estate. The royal psalmist said, "When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I;" but how many are there who, oppressed by the heat and burden of the day, see, or rather fancy that they see, a far better covert to fly to than Him who is "as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," Isa. xxxii. 2. How many Wills-o'-the-whisp draw aside the trembling heart, and deceive the wounded conscience, promising much, and performing little! Things are not what they seem.

The pale-faced invalid, who has been made to possess days of darkness, and to whom wearisome nights have been appointed, hears of some famous mountebank, some medical charlatan, who, reckless of falsehood and dishonesty, unblushingly undertakes to cure all diseases. To him the sick man hies, sees in him a benefactor, and in his nostrum a healing balm, an infallible restorative to health and vigour. By and by the mountebank is unmasks, and the delusion is made clear; but it is too late—the invalid has

been robbed of his remaining strength. Things are not what they seem !

The thoughtless spendthrift, who has involved himself in numberless embarrassments ; who has mortgaged his means, and anticipated all his resources ; whose way is hedged up with thorns, by accident casts his eye on a paragraph in some public journal. "Money on easy terms," seems like a sunbeam to his delighted vision, and with breathless haste he hurries off to the kind-hearted and generous lender. Gladly he puts his name to the proffered bills, and in another hour hopes to receive the seasonable supply. Things are not what they seem ! When he returns, the lenders are vanished ! His golden expectations are but a dream ; but the responsibility he has incurred is a fearful reality.

One of the most striking instances of a deceitful outside show, in the natural creation, that I ever remember to have witnessed, was in the trunk of an oak. To all appearance, there stood a goodly tree before me, and its giant branches were redundantly clad with verdure ; but on a closer inspection I found the trunk to be a mere outside shell. The side opposite to that on which I had at first gazed, had, with the heart of the tree, altogether decayed away. Much of a similar nature may sometimes be found among mankind,

an outside, flourishing appearance, without a heart. In a tree this is to be regretted ; but in a human being it is a wretched spectacle.

I once conversed privately with a public jester, whose avocation was, dressed in gay apparel, to excite merriment in the multitude that gathered around him. What a world of comicality could he throw into his expressive face ! What an exhaustless fund of drollery did he possess ! and what roars of irrepressible laughter did he call forth amid the crowd ! He was, to all appearance, one of the most light-hearted and happy beings that ever wore a smile. But what did he tell me in private ?—that the colour on his cheek was painted, that the jests he uttered were hackneyed, that the mirth he manifested was feigned, and that he was one of the most miserable of mortals on the face of the earth. This may be no ordinary instance of the striking difference between the fiction and the fact, the shadow and the substance, the outside show and the inward feeling ; but approaches to something like the same thing are to be seen around us, every day of our lives.

Thus have I, in a rambling, unconnected way, dwelt a moment on the subject of outside show. Should you pursue the thought, you may be more happy in your reflections than I have been in

mine. Certain it is, that things are not what they seem ; let, then, the knowledge of this truth lead us, more and more, to mistrust our own judgment and to look above for wisdom and instruction.

ON OLD TIMES

To bewail the lamentable changes that have taken place in the world, and to speak in praise of old times, is a kind of charter which has long been enjoyed by old people. Finding that we cannot figure away as we once used to do, we fondly turn to times and seasons when we showed ourselves off to better advantage. This was done by those who went before us, and will, no doubt, be done by those who shall follow after.

This inclination on the part of age to run back half a century, or perhaps threescore years, is not confined to any particular class of people. It may be observed in rich and poor, whether they live in town or country. “Times are not as they have been!” “Things are very different now to what they once were!” and, “Matters are come to a pretty pass now a-days!” are expressions that most aged people have occasionally in their mouths. True it is that they get laughed at for them, and that they do not always make converts

to their opinion ; but, for all this, their opinion is most tenaciously entertained.

To own the truth, there is a kind of “caste” among aged people which never will, nor can be given up. It is dear to us, and we cling to it till the day of our death. We say to ourselves, “ Young people are stronger than we are, and we acknowledge it ; but we are wiser than young people are, and they ought to acknowledge this in their turn.” Whether, therefore, we express it or not, it is a settled thing that our “caste” is a grade higher than theirs. A young fox-hunting squire in his scarlet coat, who has a few thousands a year, may give himself what airs he pleases, and pass by his aged tenant with disdain ; but the old man, if a kind-hearted one, will be sure to mutter to himself, “ Poor fellow ! he has not cut his wise teeth yet ; he will know better by and by.” And if he be not kind-hearted, his language will be somewhat stronger.

You have heard old people, no doubt, indulge themselves in praising the days gone by, and in dispraising more modern times. When past times and present times are put in opposite scales by them, past times are sure to be of full tale and weight, and present times are equally sure to kick the beam.

“ Fine doings, now-a-days ! ” cries the village

dame, sitting in her old arm chair, with a stick in her hand, and a pair of spectacles on her nose. “Fine doings ! I have seen times that I shall never see again, more’s the pity—farmers had hard hands then, and dressed like farmers, not booted and spurred, and mounted on blood horses, as you may see them now. Their sons held the plough, and knew nothing of the boarding school ; their daughters milked the cows, and tended the dairy, and never saw a harpsichord in their lives. Farmers’ wives were not then fine ladies, but took their own poultry to market, mounted on their dobbins. Eggs were three dozen for a shilling, and fresh butter sixpence a pound !”

“Those were the times,” observes the grey-haired hairdresser, whose shaking fingers can hardly handle his scissors. “There has never been much good among us since people left off hair-powder. I have had as many as a dozen wigs on my blocks at once in a morning, all wanted in a hurry, and as many gentlemen and ladies to attend at their own houses. Men looked like men in those days, not like the scarecrows they do now.”

“Ah,” exclaims the old citizen, who wears his few remaining hairs powdered and tied in a small tail, and who continues to attend his warehouse from ten to four, though he is worth a hundred

thousand pounds, “Business is not what it used to be. Things are sadly changed of late for the worse. Profits are less, and risk is greater. More money was to be made in a month when I first began business, than can be made in a year now.”

“It had not used to be so!” cries out the white-headed grandfather, in reproving his graceless grandson for his pert behaviour to his parents. “When I was a boy, I durst as well have eaten my own fingers as answered my father and mother in that manner; but lads are men now, before they have half a dozen hairs on their chins. No respect! no duty! no filial affection! the times are clean altered. Old men know nothing now-a-days, and youngsters know every thing!”

“Talk o’ fishin,” says the Northumberlandshire fisherman, “there’s no sic fishin in Coquet now, as when I was a lad. It was nowse then but to flung in and pull them out, by twees-es and threes-es, if ye had sae mony heuks on; but now, a body may keep threshin’ at the water a’ day atween Halystane and Weldon, and hardly catch three dozen, and mony a time not that. About fifty year syne, I mind o’ seein trouts that thick i’ the thrum, below Rothbury, that if ye had stucken the end o’ your gad into the water among them, it wad amaist hae studden upreet.” If so be that my readers are strangers to the Northumberland

dialect, I would fain let them know that the “thrum” means the confined part of a stream, and that a “gad” is a fishing rod.

In this way it is that we grey-beards give vent to our emotions, confirming one another in opinions which the older we grow the closer we hold. I am not aware that much mischief can arise from our high estimation of days gone by ; but I do wish that youth and age thought more favourably than they do of each other.

The prepossession in favour of age, on the part of old men, is pretty much reversed in the opinion of young men. Now my opinion is, that old men should give way a little, and not take it for granted, that judgment and wisdom cannot enter a head whose brows are not graven with age. We should not write the matter down as a Median and Persian law, that old things are better than new. Remember the words of Holy Writ, “Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these ? (nor, Why are the present better than the former?) for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this,” Eccl. vii. 10. The question should not be, Are the times better? but, Are we better? Not, Are we making fortunes? but, Are we making progress on our way to heaven? What can it matter to us, who have so few sands remaining in the

glass of life, whether we are great or little, figures or ciphers, somebodies or nobodies, in the estimation of others? We have had our day, and ought to be thankful; and we ought, also, to be willing that others should have their day too.

But while I thus speak, it appears also reasonable that young men should give way a little too, and not be over hasty in concluding that a man has no further business in the world, merely because he speaks slowly, walks softly, and thinks more deeply than he used to do. With a little bearing and forbearing, youth and age, young men and old men, may go on very well together; but without this forbearance, we rudely jostle one another, and sadly tread on each others' toes.

He who would receive respect, be he young or old, should be willing to pay it, while a knowledge of our own infirmities should render us very compassionate towards all around. Oh that we could at all times, in the midst of our prepossessions and prejudices, "abhor that which is evil," and "cleave to that which is good!" "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;" and in "honour prefer one another," Rom. xii. 9, 10.

ON ALMSHOUSES.

I AM fond, ay, very fond of almshouses, let them be erected upon what plan they may. Whether built in a straight line, a crescent, a circle, or a square ; whether stone, brick, cemented, or stuccoed, so that they are almshouses for the widow and the aged, I regard them with heartfelt satisfaction.

As soon as I see a square or an oval stone in the front of small houses inscribed, “ Dame Dorothy Hunt, of Bocking, in Essex, bequeathed by will the sum of five hundred pounds for the erection of almshouses ;” or, “ These twelve almshouses were built and endowed A.D. 1721, at the sole cost of Mr. Samuel Harwars, draper and citizen of London ;” or, “ Mrs. Agnes Aldershaw, spinster, of Whitby, in Yorkshire, erected these almshouses for the reception of sixteen poor women ;” or, “ The six almshouses belonging to the worshipful company of Girdlers, were rebuilt by the said company ;” or, indeed, with any other inscription of a similar kind, my heart yearns

towards the inmates of the place, and I make a pause and call back to my memory some whom I knew of the excellent of the earth, who once inhabited almshouses, but who now, as I humbly hope and trust, are inhabitants of “a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,” 2 Cor. v. 1.

Even now I can see poor widow Winn in her old arm chair, thanking God for the load of coals which has been just stocked up in her coal-hole. Widow Nokes, too, as lowly-minded and grateful a creature as ever soaked a hard crust in a cup of tea ; she is before me, and I, seated on the side of her little bedstead with a friend, am reading to her from her dog's-eared Bible, the fortieth chapter of Isaiah : “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run, and not be weary ; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Andrew Hollins with his lame arm, and Michael Arrowsmith sitting in the sun, on the bench by the almshouse door, with his crutches beside him, are present to my memory. Weak as they were in body, they were both mighty in the Scriptures and strong in the faith of Jesus Christ and him crucified. Thus it is that when saints are sent for to heaven, they leave behind them, in their example, a token of remembrance

on the earth that tends to the glory of the Redeemer.

Yes! yes! I like almshouses, especially those of the humbler sort. I like the gardens before the doors, and regard with a friendly feeling the spinach, and cabbage plants, the marigolds and sweet margery, the gillyflowers and sweetwilliams that grow in them. I would not even kill a caterpillar in an almshouse garden; by-and-by he will be a butterfly, and pay with interest by his liveliness and beauty for the leaf that he has eaten.

The old folks that live in almshouses are all favourites with me. As I see them go in and out, whether I speak to them or not, I give them my blessing. Some of them look cheerful, and then they have credit with me for carrying grateful hearts in their bosoms. Others look a little cross; but who can tell what cares may occasion this? they must be borne with. Christian charity “is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things,” 1 Cor. xiii. 5, 7. We must not be severe to mark the infirmities of those whose trials may exceed our own.

Again I say that I like almshouses, and I like heartily, too, the good old souls who founded

them, in spite of the uncouth, antiquated statuary that does its best to make them look awful and forbidding. The long curly-haired wigs and flowing gowns of the citizen founders, and the prim, starched-up dresses of the dames and spinsters, are a little freezing in their influence, and yet I love even these antiquated effigies. It is not orthodox, and consistent with God's holy word, to put up a prayer for the dead; but it is orthodox and consistent with God's holy word to think kindly of them, and to encourage the hope, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, that their works of charity were the effect of a lively faith in God's mercy, and a love for the Saviour of sinners, as well as of a desire to be the friend of the friendless, and to add to the comfort of such as stand in need of assistance and support.

It is an easy thing to say that the founders of almshouses have more desire to get reputation for their charity, than to afford comfort to the partakers of their bounty; but is it wise, is it just, is it kind, is it Christian-like, thus to attach bad motives to good deeds without a knowledge that will justify such a harsh opinion? Human nature is full of infirmity, and almshouse founders are no more free from pride, vanity, and ambition than their neighbours; but let us not leap to the

conclusion, that because they have served others, they must of necessity have been actuated by the desire to serve themselves.

Is there one who shall read these remarks, whom God has blessed with the means, and who is fostering the intention in his heart to erect at some future day a row of almshouses? If, with a single eye to God's glory and the good of his fellow beings, such is his design, highly do I honour him; but let not such an one think that Old Humphrey will for a moment spare the selfish ambition, the poor pitiful vanity, of doing a deed of apparent benevolence, that his name may be trumpeted about in the world, and handed down to posterity as a miracle of philanthropy. I will not say with the poet,

“ Who builds a house to God, and not to fame,
Will never mark the marble with his name;”

because, in many cases, it is an advantage, if not absolutely necessary, that the name of the founder of a charity should be made public; but I do say, that a man should remember, even when he scatters his bounty with the most liberal hand, that he is only bestowing a part of what God has already bestowed upon him; and, therefore, thankfulness, and not pride, should be the mainspring of his actions.

Some of the sculptured resemblances of the founders of almshouses are ludicrously uncouth. No longer ago than yesterday, I was standing opposite one of them. There stood the benevolent man in his flowing robe, long curls, waistcoat half down his thighs, and shoes nearly up to his ankles, with gold collar and gold chain hanging from his neck. His left foot was advanced so much before the other, that he seemed to be holding out his leg to call forth the admiration of the spectator ; and this, for odd thoughts sometimes come into my mind, set me musing on the words of holy writ : “The Lord delighteth not in the strength of the horse : he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy,” Psa. cxlvii. 10, 11.

For the last time, I say, then, that I like almshouses heartily, and that I like those heartily that found them, and those who inhabit them. More than once have I said that active benevolence to man is the soul of thanksgiving to God, especially when exercised towards God’s people ; and that the Lord of life and glory condescends to accept such offerings, is, I think, borne out by the words, “ Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you,

he shall in no wise lose his reward," Matt. x. 42; and, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," Matt. xxv. 40.

ON CEDAR PENCILS.

ANOTHER odd subject, you will say ; but if you bear in mind from what odd and trivial sources many important thoughts, and words, and actions have arisen, you will let me take my course, and allow me, in my rambling way, to prate a little on the subject of cedar pencils. It is the settled conviction of my mind, that there is no subject in the wide range of thought that may not, directly or indirectly, be connected with profitable meditations on the Divine goodness.

Oh, how much more dependent are we frail and feeble creatures, for our daily comforts on little things, than we are apt to imagine ! What should we do without pins and needles ; thread and string ; snuffers, penknives, and scissors ? Were you to deprive me, and ten thousand others in the world, of our green shades, spectacles, pens, ink, paper, and cedar pencils ; it would be like clipping a fish of its fins, or depriving a bird of her wings.

A cedar pencil is to me a thing of value ; for

without one, how should I note down my passing thoughts in wandering through the highways and byways of life? I have tried all manner of substitutes in vain. Some time ago I took an inkhorn into the fields, and hung it to a button of my waistcoat ; but a friend told me that every one I met would take me for an exciseman. My pride —what poor proud creatures we are!—took the alarm, and my inkhorn was laid by. I then tried the patent pencil-case, which is supplied by points of black lead ; but I could not write with it pleasantly, for the points, such as they were, never seemed free from shaking, so my patent pencil-case was put aside too. A few weeks ago I bought one of the pocket fountain-pens, that, when once properly arranged, enables me, by the pressure of my thumb, to obtain a supply of ink to write with in the open air. It cost me sixteen silver shillings, and for the passing hour did very well ; but the ink was shortly dried up, and then it took me half an hour to render my pocket fountain-pen fit for service. In short, I was obliged to resume my cedar-pencil.

Both the sight and smell of a cedar pencil are pleasant to me, bringing with them, as they do, so many remembrances of my youth, from the time when I first sketched the outline of a gate-post to the day when I finished my chef d'œuvre

of Conway Castle. Days of my childhood! what a contrast are ye to the present hour! The ruddy-faced boy—the grey-headed old man. The future gilded with the bright beams of hope—the past shadowed with the dark clouds of experience. Well! well!

With shine and shade, with spring and fall—
Mercy has mingled with them all.

The trade of cedar pencil making is conducted, to a considerable extent, by the Jewish people; so that in their business, no doubt, they are often carried back in imagination to the goodly groves of Lebanon, and the temple of temples built by Solomon.

How fallen are the Israel of God, and what a lesson do they proclaim to every unbelieving heart! Who hath rebelled against the Lord with advantage? “Who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?” Job ix. 4. How many nations have been cut off for their pride and impiety! The mighty of Babylon and Egypt were brought low, and the princes of Media and Persia were humbled in the dust. “The Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. The cedars in the garden of God could

not hide him ; the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut trees were not like his branches ; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height : I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen ; he shall surely deal with him : I have driven him out for his wickedness," Ezek. xxxi. How ought we to pray for the grace of humility !

The cedar pencil is a light, cleanly, and portable appendage, that thousands and tens of thousands carry in their pockets, or their pocket-books. The merchant makes with it his memoranda on 'Change ; the artist sketches with it the surrounding landscape, amid the lakes and the mountains ; the author notes down with it his musing thoughts and wayward fancies on the hill, or in the valley : and tradesmen, of different grades and shades, find a use for it in their several callings.

What a delightful talent is that of representing on canvas, or paper, the likeness of the persons and things that interest us as we journey on in our pilgrimage to a better world ! The camel-hair pencil may be used for this purpose in oil colours and water colours ; the pen may be dipped

in bistre, Indian-red, and common ink; and chalks of different colours are very effective; but neither the pen, the camel-hair pencil, nor chalk are so easily carried about with us, nor are they so ready to use at the instant required, as the cedar pencil. I have a keen gratification in drawings and etchings; and in a season of leisure could turn over a portfolio by the hour, whether filled with specimens good, bad, or indifferent, from the free and fiery sketches of Raffaelle and Michael Angelo, to the tame scrawls in the trumpery bag of Old Humphrey.

What goodly drawings have I seen executed with the cedar pencil! Again I say, that I am fond of things of this kind; and while I gaze on them with admiration for the skill of the artist, I go a little farther: I think of Him, who, in his wisdom, mingled the minerals of the earth so as to enable his creatures to make so useful a thing as a pencil. All things were made by him: I thank him for every gift, and among them for that which he has thus provided.

A friend of mine thinks, and I think with him, that some clever, ingenious pencil-case maker might, with some little trouble, improve upon the cases now in use. It often tries my temper, which, to my shame and sorrow, is sadly too hasty, and ought not to be tried by such trifling things.

It often tries my temper when I have to trim up the blunt end of my cedar pencil, and screw it into the sliding ring inside the case ; out of which, perhaps, it falls again in half an hour ; and then, the worst of it is, that with such repeated shaving and trimming at the wrong end, it soon gets too short to use at the right one, so that, on an average, one third of my cedar pencil is wasted. Come ! all ye free hearted and fine spirited ingenious pencil-case makers, see what you can do. I freely offer you a premium for an improvement. The very first of you that succeeds in giving to the public an improved pencil-case, in which less of the pencil is wasted, shall have—I cannot with convenience say a hundred pounds nor yet fifty ; but you shall have instead, the hearty thanks of Old Humphrey.

It ought to be known, that many of the ink-sheddings of mine which have met the public eye, poor as they are, would be a good deal worse, had they not occasionally received the corrections and curtailments of a judicious friend. His cedar pencil has often been put in requisition to blot out my defective opinions and crude conclusions.

It was but the other day, that we were sitting together at a table well covered with books and manuscripts at his own habitation. The word of God had been read, we had been on our knees

together, and a prayer had ascended to the throne that angels gaze upon with holy joy.

The room, for I love to sketch a picture, was a pleasant one, and its furniture in keeping one part with another. It manifested a distaste for finery and show, and a just appreciation of the substantial comforts, and useful refinements, of civilized society. On the chimney piece stood a time-piece, *à la Egyptienne*, with a sphinx on the top, and pillars in relief at the corners. This bore an inscription setting forth that it was the respectful tribute of a few grateful Sunday-school teachers, for the long and valued services of him to whom it was presented. Another part of the present consisted of two Egyptian ornaments of the Cleopatra needle kind.—Facsimiles of ancient sculpturings, with hieroglyphics from top to bottom. There were, also, two chalices, of the same form that I could imagine those to have been which were taken from the temple of Jerusalem; out of which the impious Belshazzar drank wine, when he praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of wood, and of stone.

These were the shiny parts of the room; now for the shadowy. In one of the recesses, pushed back as though they were not to be noticed, stood a pill-box, a medicine-bottle, and a wine-glass. How mute, and yet how eloquent! They told a

tale, that he who runs might read—a tale of life, to which none but a fool would refuse to listen with attention.

Well! as I said, we were sitting together at a table well covered with manuscripts, and my friend, with his cedar pencil in his dexter hand, had a manuscript of mine before him. I looked over his shoulder as he dashed his pencil most remorselessly across first one passage and then another. At last he came to what I, in my poor notions, had regarded as a sort of climax of all that was eloquent and excellent; when, to my surprise, his ready pencil went through the whole passage in a twinkling; not with a faint, lightly-drawn line, intimating that the case was a little doubtful, but with a black, bold, resolute, and orthodox dash, putting it, as it were, beyond the possibility to restore it.

“Stop! stop!” cried I, “why, that is one of my toppers!” * However, it was all in vain; for not only was I compelled to witness the extinction of my favourite passage, but, alas! at last to acknowledge that its annihilation was just.

Since writing the above, my friend who has been looking over my remarks, has given me the following additional rap on the knuckles with his cedar

* See Old Humphrey’s Addresses, page 13.

pencil : " Those who undertake to give information to others, friend Humphrey, should, at least, be careful that their own information is correct. Cedar pencils are not made of the wood of the cedar of Lebanon, as you appear to suppose, but of the red cedar, a species of juniper or pine, which grows in North America and the West Indies."

On examining the subject more narrowly, I find, as I have often found on such occasions, that he is right, and that I am wrong. The wood of the red cedar is commoner than that of the cedar of Lebanon ; its softness, powerful odour, and property of resisting insects, render it very suitable for the purpose.

The plumbago, or black lead, used in cedar pencils, is found in Cumberland, and in several parts of the continent of America.

I could run on a long time on the subject of cedar pencils ; but as it might not be so pleasant to you as to myself, we will now bring things to a close. Whatever may be our possessions and our powers, they are the gifts of God, and as such should be thankfully acknowledged. Be it little or much that we call our own, by and by it will signify but little. The ungodly possessor of a lead mine and a grove of cedars may be envied for his wealth ; but give me, as a much more valuable heritage, a grateful heart and a cedar pencil.

ON THE VARYING MOODS OF THE MIND.

PEOPLE who lead active lives, and whose cup of occupation is full, are seldom given to much musing. There are others, however, who from easy circumstances, want of energy, or ill-health, pass much of their time unoccupied ; and these may be found musing away many an hour. When the mind is at ease, and the heart grateful and happy, musing is an excellent thing ; but when, with a discontented and repining spirit, we look on the shadowy side of things, musing is one of the worst habits in the world.

Though few people are more fully employed than I am, yet am I no stranger to the varying moods of mind that exert their influence over humanity. Let us now allude to a few of them, for as they much affect our thoughts, our words, and our deeds, it becomes us, as far as we can, to give them a profitable direction. Our happy moods may be encouraged, and our unfavourable ones

repressed ; for a man may be ill-tempered, without trying to provoke those around him ; and he may be sad, without wilfully making others as unhappy as himself.

There is hardly a better way of understanding mankind, than that of narrowly examining our own hearts. Whatever we observe in others, we have the germ of it in ourselves. If, therefore, I speak of the varying moods of the mind with which I am familiar, it is most likely that I shall introduce to you some of your old acquaintance.

There is a careless mood—would that I could say, with truth, I have never known it ; a mood in which we are neither melted by God's mercies, nor affected by his judgments. Friends are carried to the tomb, sabbaths pass over us, and time rolls on towards eternity, and still we are at ease. This is a sad state for many reasons, and for this among them, that such mood of mind calls for trouble. Pilgrims were never intended to walk through the world as smoothly as along a bowling green. “ Tremble, ye that are at ease.” “ Be troubled, ye careless ones.” We may put it down as a certainty, that so sure as we are careless and at ease, so sure will trouble come upon us. I had rather not sleep, than be unthankful for a good night's rest. I had rather sorrow for sin, than sin without sorrowing.

There is a desponding mood ; and I need not ask if you have ever known it, for the proudest spirit, the stoutest heart that is hooped with ribs, at times gives way to despondency. It is not only in the actual condition of his creatures, but, also, in the moods of their mind, that God puts down the mighty from their seat, and exalts the humble and meek. Before now I have been so shorn of my strength, and left so desolate, that the heavens have been as brass to me, and the earth as iron. I have felt myself to be such a poor, forlorn, good-for-nothing creature, as to think that I should never hold up my head again. In this weak-minded, God-dishonouring spirit, I have written bitter things against myself, magnifying my infirmities, diminishing my mercies, darkening my hopes, and heaping up, instead of clearing away, the brambles in my path. It is hard to fight against, and still harder to conquer this mood, for when it once lays firm hold of us, it drags us down to the very dust. My advice to you is, to wage war against it with all the powers of your mind ; set about something that requires energy of action, something that will force your thoughts into another channel ; and if, after trying your best to keep clear of the Slough of Despond, you do tumble into it at last, do as Christian of old did ; he

endeavoured to struggle to that side of the slough that was farthest from his “own house, and next to the wicket gate.” That is a precious prayer : “ When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I,” Psa. lxi. 2.

There is an anxious mood of mind, in which some are too often found, and, now and then, I have had a touch of it myself. It leads many to overlook their mercies ; to be dissatisfied with such things as they have, and to imagine that the very bits and drops which support them are in jeopardy. I have known some, blessed with riches, who have looked forward in this anxious mood to poverty ; and some inhabiting goodly mansions, who have trembled lest the workhouse should await them. Is this a suitable return to the Giver of all good for his abundant bounty ? Is it not enough to cause him to visit us with the very evil we fear ? Like the disciples of old, we stand in need of the rebuke and the encouragement to “ consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap ; which neither have storehouse nor barn ; and God feedeth them : how much more are ye better than the fowls ! ” Luke xii. 24.

There is a proud and ambitious mood, and a bad mood it is. Sometimes—but this is not often the case—I catch myself musing on earthly honours and advantages, forgetting the brief tenure

of worldly possessions, and that human life is “even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away,” James iv. 14.

When the Greek emperors were crowned, in the midst of all the pomp and splendour of their coronation, they were, on one hand, presented with a vase filled with ashes and dead men’s bones, and, on the other with flax, which was set on fire. Thus were they, by a double emblem, reminded of their mortality and the frailness of their worldly honours. At the present day, when a pope is crowned, a master of the ceremonies carries a lighted wax taper in one hand, and a basin in the other. In the basin are castles and palaces made of flax ; and the master of the ceremonies sets fire to them three times over, repeating each time the words, “Behold, holy father, how the glory of this world passes away !”

Now, though I am not likely to be made a pope, (pope Humphrey would sound rather comical !) and still less likely to be crowned a Greek emperor, yet may I get a profitable admonition from the burning flax ; for there are other things in the world that may lead away the affections of an old man beside the temporalities of Greece and Rome.

As I said before, it is but seldom that I muse upon earthly honours and advantages, for usually

I hold these things as light as any of my neighbours ; yet, now and then, I have been silly enough to give way to such idle and unprofitable speculations. If in these moments of infirmity I could catch a glance, either of my grey hairs or the furrows on my brow, it might set me musing on other things. How is it with you ? Do you find, at times, creeping over you something like the ambitious spirit of Haman, when he wanted to be clad in goodly garments, and paraded through the city ? This ambitious mood, this vain and worldly spirit, is no credit to us. Let us pray against it earnestly, lest God should give us what we desire, and withhold what we need.

There is an humble mood—I do not mean a desponding one ; and a sweet mood it is. Oh that I could rest in it for ever. We need not in this mood be told, for we feel it, that God “giveth grace unto the humble,” James iv. 6. I hope, my friends that you are anxious to possess the grace of humility, looking to Him for it who can alone bestow it. We are never so peaceful, never so happy, never so secure, as when we are humble. We then envy no one, and we hate no one ; and, so far from taking credit to ourselves in any thing, our language is, “ Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory,” Psa. cxv. 1. In this mood we are feelingly persuaded

of our nothingness, and gladly turn to Him who “is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them,” Heb. vii. 25. Now, I am sadly afraid that this humble mood is not exactly the one in which we are most commonly found; that we cannot always, nor indeed generally, say, “Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty. I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother,” Psa. cxxxii. 1, 2.

There is a cheerful and light-hearted mood, not a vain and trifling one; a mood of mind that gilds this world with sunshine, and makes the path to the next appear as straight as an arrow and as smooth as a bowling-green. We feel no heavy burdens; we have no apprehensions of evil, but look on the bright side of every thing. We go out with joy, and are led forth with peace; the mountains and hills appear to break forth into singing, and the trees of the field to clap their hands. The very wilderness is glad, and the desert itself seems to blossom as the rose.

Are you, now and then, in this delightful mood? If so, be thankful; for it is a choice gift on the part of our heavenly Father. None can reasonably hope to enjoy it long but those who, in passing through this world, have fixed their hope of

another on Him "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness," 1 Pet. ii. 24.

There is a grateful mood, such as comes over us on our first walk abroad after sickness. The frame is weak, for it has been shaken ; but the heart is grateful and happy. How abundantly, in such a mood as this, does our heavenly Father make amends to us for the pains we have felt, and the weary midnight tossings to and fro we have endured ! The fever has left us, the anguish has departed ; the pulse, that a few weeks ago was tearing away so fearfully and irregularly, is gently beating, and as true in its time as a chronometer. The air is so pure, the clear sky is so blue, and the trees are so green, though we cannot see them very distinctly for the joyful tears that bedew our eyes, that we are filled with thankfulness and delight. We feel, then, the goodness of God. Do you go with me while I describe this grateful mood of mind ? I trust so ; for if you have not known it, you are a stranger to one of the most delightful feelings in the human heart.

In such a mood as this we can bless God for afflicting us, as well as for raising us up from the bed of affliction. We can bless him as heartily for what he has withheld, as for what he has

bestowed. The truth is, we can bless God for all things, and desire that all things shall bless and praise his holy name. It is not so much our tongues as our hearts and souls that cry aloud, "Praise ye the Lord. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord." Psa. cl. 1, 6.

I might speak of an envious mood, in which we look on those around us with a scowl, on account of something they possess, which we in vain desire to obtain ; of an angry mood, in which we rub up our animosities by dwelling on our real or supposed injuries ; of a repining mood, wherein we fretfully and ungratefully undervalue what it has pleased God to bestow upon us ; and of twenty others of a like kind, from which may the Father of mercies preserve us all.

There is one other mood, however, which I must not pass by. This is a sunny mood of the mind, in which zeal, and love, and gratitude appear to unite. Oh, it is too delightful to tarry long ! It imparts to us a kind of superior nature, raising us, for the time, above our infirmities. It comes sometimes upon me with power, and then such glorious aspirations, such unbounded benevolence, such ardent desires to conceive and achieve all that is kind, lovely, intellectual, pure, elevated, and holy, animate my spirit, that I seem to partake, of the

nature of an angel, yearning to be the messenger of peace and of joy to all around ; and then, perhaps, in the brief space of a flying hour, the would-be angel comes tumbling down from his starry heights, stripped of his glory, shorn of his beams, deprived of his disinterestedness—a poor infirm, clod-like, worldly-minded, selfish, and spirit-depressed Old Humphrey. I have now given you something to muse on ; and if you are in a mood to turn it to account, an hour devoted to reflection may promote your own good and God's glory.

OLD HUMPHREY IN HIS ALTITUDES.

As my heart feels bigger than usual in my bosom, and as I am in one of those moods when, if there be aught that is high and holy within, it struggles to come forth, I have seated myself at my study-table, and taken up my pen, to see if, haply, I can fling on my paper any of those elastic and spirit-stirring thoughts which, at times, raise us above our common standard.

There are glorious moments that now and then shed their influence over me; moments when my spirit springs away, as if disembodied, on some undefined and imaginary enterprise ennobling to humanity, elevated and pure, philanthropic and disinterested. “Few and far between” are these golden glimpses and high-wrought aspirations, but yet they do come, filling with sunshine my whole heart and mind. In these seasons I am weary of being nobody and doing nothing; my heart yearns for higher and holier objects than those which have occupied me; the pigmy would be a giant, the sparrow on the house-top an eagle

soaring in the air, and the lowly worm of the earth an angel—ay, an archangel of the heavens !

But though there is much that is delightful to be found in this earth-spurning, sky-scraping attitude of mind, and though it is not the poor pitiful ambition of holding up my head or my actions higher than those of my neighbours that influences me, yet I am constrained to believe, after some reflection on the matter, that there is much of infirmity and pride mingled with these high-wrought emotions. In such seasons, the real language of the heart is, perhaps, “If God would send me flying through the world like an angel, I would do every thing for him ; but while he requires me to creep along a lowly pathway, or confines me to one little spot, that I may do one little thing, I can do nothing.” There is a turning on the heel from the humble path of obedience, to the proud highway of hot-hearted zeal. “I do well to be angry.” “Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel ?” Jonah iv. 9 ; 2 Kings v. 12 ; or, in other words, “Is not my way better than God’s way ?”

It may be that some of you are acquainted with this state of feeling, and if so, be on your guard against high-mindedness ! To be satisfied to do that which the High and Holy One has appointed us to perform, is true wisdom. As all angels

cannot be archangels, so hewers of wood and drawers of water must not expect to be builders of the temple ; footmen should not be riders on horses and drivers of chariots, neither can common-place Christians hope to be employed on uncommon enterprises. To know and to do the will of our heavenly Father, should be the highest pinnacle of Christian desire. When our ambitious yearnings go mounting in the air like sky-rockets, like sky-rockets, alas ! they soon come tumbling down again. We shall do well to remember, that diamonds are bedded in dross, and that in like manner our purest heavenly desires are imbedded in the dross of a sinful, earthly heart.

Pride, make of it what we will, is a sad enemy to our peace, and a proud man is a target at which a fool may fire without missing his mark. It may be said of spiritual pride as truly as of any other, that "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall," Prov. xvi. 18. Whenever, impatient of his common duties, a Christian man unreasonably desires to be promoted to higher occupations, taking the highest room before the Master says to him, "Friend, go up higher," depend upon it that spiritual pride is at work in his heart. You see what pains I take to prove myself guilty ; but, disguise it as we may, truth is truth ; and as I believe

that these high-minded emotions of mine spring more from pride than from any other principle, they deserve no quarter at my hands.

But now, having dealt honestly by myself, let me ask, How is it with you? If plain dealing be medicine to my mind, it may operate medicinally on yours; and, to confess the truth, I have no predilection to flog myself, and to let you go free. If you ever do get into one of these high-minded, discontented moods, watch over yourselves narrowly, lest it bring trouble and sorrow upon your hearts. It is unlovely, unreasonable, and unchristian-like to give ourselves airs, even in our desires, altering the wise arrangements of our heavenly Father, reversing the order of his glorious system, blotting out from existence what we like not, and retaining only what is suited to our views; taking the sweet, and refusing the bitter. "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Job ii. 10. What right have we, instead of encouraging thankfulness for the changing seasons, to desire, because it may fall in with our present temper, an eternal spring, an unceasing summer, a perpetual autumn, or an everlasting winter? Oh for the hearty emanation from the heart as well as from the lip, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Never, perhaps, was Peter prouder than when

indignantly he flung back the warning admonition of his Master, and replied, " If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise," Mark xiv. 31 ; and yet before the cock crew twice, he denied him thrice. Never was Saul more elated than when, urgent on his high-minded mission, with hot, burning zeal, he bitterly breathed out " threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," and yet it was then that he fell to the very ground, Acts ix. Often have I quoted, and often do I yet hope to quote, the well-known lines of honest John Bunyan :

" He that is down needs fear no fall ;
He that is low no pride ;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide."

Now, think not that I mean to censure or repress any lively emotions of zeal, any ardent desires to do more than ordinary for God's glory and man's good that may spring up either in your heart or mine ; for that is not the case. It is only when this zeal and these desires make us discontented with our station, and disqualify us for our plain, common-place, and intelligible duties, that I would suspect the presence of that pride which requires to be humbled. Oh ! it is a precious thing to possess an humble and willing mind,

ready to do God's bidding, not only in carving the top stones of the temple, but also in hewing wood and drawing water.

The higher we climb, the greater is our danger ; the faster we run, the more likely are we to stumble. It may be that a sudden sense of my peculiar infirmities has abated the sky-scraping attitude of mind in which I began to pen down these observations, and made me more than usually afraid of high-mindedness ; but it seems as though it would be, at this moment, a relief to me to take the lowest place ; to sit in the gate with Mordecai, rather than with Haman to approach the throne of the king Ahasuerus. Old Humphrey is in his altitudes no longer, and his parting words are not, " Rejoice in the Lord alway : and again I say, rejoice !" Phil. iv. 4 ; but rather, " Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall," 1 Cor. x. 12 ; and, " Be not high-minded, but fear," Rom. xi. 20.

ON THE GAY DREAMS OF YOUTH.

It is said that “men are but children fully grown;” and if I were to be asked in what childish amusements they mostly indulge, I would say, in the game of bubble-blowing. We begin to blow our bubbles early in childhood, and we keep it up, with little intermission, to old age.

With what delight does the young urchin gaze on the glittering globe of soap and water that he has fairly launched into the air! There it goes! mounting up with the breeze that blows, and again descending low. One moment as high as the house, and at another almost touching the ground. Onward! onward it holds its course, escaping every danger, till, at last, it bursts as it strikes against the edge of a tombstone in an adjoining churchyard.

The bubbles of our after years too, bear a strong family likeness to those of our childhood. Some burst as soon as blown. Some vanish suddenly in the air; and if any of them mount over

the churchyard wall, they are sure to disappear amid the tombs.

“Wishing” is a losing game to all who play at it; and yet, who is there that altogether refrains? I never heard but of one man who could say, “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content,” Phil iv. 11.

Let us take a stripling from among the many who are, at this moment, banqueting on the airy food of future greatness; who are, in other words, engaged in bubble-blowing, and enter for a moment into his golden dreams. It is true, he may be poor; but the Rothschilds were not always rich, though, at last, they amassed millions. He has heard of Whittington, a poor friendless lad, quitting London with his bundle in his hand, and turning back again to wealth and renown, beckoned by the bells ringing out musically, as he fancied, the words,

“ Turn again, Whittington,
Thrice Lord Mayor of London.”

Why, it is very possible that, some day, he may be as great a man as Whittington, who had only a cat with which to make his fortune. Not that he has, at present, any very bright prospects before him in real life; but that only renders the more bright the vision of his fancy.

Well, then, it is a settled thing with him that he will be a merchant, and sail the seas in a ship of his own, carrying out beads to barter with Africans for ivory and ostrich feathers ; and bales of cloth to exchange for gold. There is no preventing his future prosperity ; he will soon become rich, in his own imagination, and ride in a coach and six !

And now the bubble is at its height ! Poor fellow ! what a pity that he cannot keep it in the air ! Alas ! down it must come, breaking against the very ground. The poor lad works at a trade, marries early, has a large family ; his health fails him, his friends forsake him ; want springs upon him like an armed man, he becomes sick and infirm, and he receives pay from the parish.

Or, suppose his youthful dream to be of another kind : his bubble, though equally frail with that I have already blown for him, may take a different direction. He is studious and fond of books, and it may be that he is poetical. Say that Chevy Chase, or the ballad of the Children in the Wood, first lures him to the flowery pathways of poesy. He reads, grows abstracted and imaginative, and “ mutters his wayward fancies ” as he goes. Goldsmith wins him, Cowper and Montgomery delight him, Gray fires him, and Byron works him up almost to frenzy, and it is well if

not to moral evil. Like a ship with no ballast and much sail, he pursues his course. He yearns for an earthly immortality. There have been Shakspeares, and Miltons, and Ossians, and Homer! Why may there not be again? What a delightful thing to publish a volume of unrivalled poetry; to be lauded by reviewers, to be sought by booksellers, to be courted by the great, and to be highly estimated by the world!

Thus he goes on wasting his life in unprofitable dreams; but see! the bubble bursts at last. He has feasted his mind and famished his body; unable to conform to the common-place usages of life, or to perform its duties, he is crushed by trouble. With an intellect superior to those around him, he is the proverb of the wise, and the butt of the foolish; and, perhaps, ends his day in a lunatic asylum. There may be many, whose sober habits and reflections may think this picture over-drawn; I have some reason to think the contrary.

Or, perhaps, he has read books of travels and wondrous adventures by sea and land, and is resolved to travel; why should not he, as well as others, do something wonderful?—ascend Mont Blanc, go down the crater of Vesuvius, and measure the Pyramids! How delightful, after wandering in strange lands like Mungo Park, encountering lions in the desert like Campbell, and

delving into the mummy pits of Egypt like Belzoni, to return home with real Indian tomahawks, bows, arrows and scalping knives ; with snakes from Africa, fishing tackle from the South Seas, birds of paradise and humming birds from the East ; and monkeys and macaws from the West.

This is a golden dream in which his fancy indulges in his waking hours. His native land is too contracted for his ardent spirit ; he longs for perils and toil, he thirsts for strange adventures ; and after all, perhaps, is put apprentice to a tailor or a weaver, passing his days on a shopboard of six feet by three, or growing old in flinging the shuttle and plying the loom in the back garret of some miserable dwelling. What a glittering bubble has here burst ! What a gay dream has here passed away ! And yet who shall venture to affirm that a thousand such occurrences as these have not taken place in common life ?

But his dream may have been yet of a different kind. The stripling may have heard the stormy music of the rattling drum, and gazed upon the gay attire of the recruiting sergeant. He may have "heard of battles," and been fired with the love of victory and fame.

Strange it is, that when the would-be warrior sees before him the prancing war-horse, and the bannered host, that he cannot see the agonies of

the dying, and the mangled heaps of the slain ! Strange, that when he hears, in imagination, the neigh of the charger, the clangour of the brazen-throated trumpet, and the roar of cannon, that he cannot hear, also, the agonizing groans of the wounded soldiers, nor the heart-rending wails of the widow and the fatherless ! Yet so it is ! Selfishness, and sin, and carnage, are crowned with glory.

But the stripling will blow his bubble. He ponders the page that sets forth the victories of Cressey and of Agincourt, of Blenheim and of Waterloo. He gazes on the marble monuments of renowned heroes, and becomes a soldier ! nay, more ; he is famed for courage, rises in rank, and his fondest wishes are realized.

But are these gay dreams less vain because they have been partly fulfilled ? The stripling has become a hero, with a scar on his forehead and a pair of epaulets on his shoulders. But there is something yet that remains to be told : besides these things, he has a galling wound which the surgeons have pronounced incurable ; and an annoying ball in his body that cannot be dislodged ! When alone, too, in the midnight hour, he heaves a sigh, somewhat in doubt whether he should not have led a more useful life in pursuing peace, than in following war ; in being a preserver rather than a destroyer of his species.

Have I said enough? Old Humphrey has been a blower of bubbles, a dreamer of dreams, through the better part of his days; let him then run his length on the gay dreams of youth.

But he may be musical; and his fanciful reveries on humanity may be musical too. The half-penny whistle, the penny trumpet, and the six-penny drum of childhood, have given way to the fife, the flute, the flageolet, and the violin. He studies the gamut, plays solos when alone, duets when with a friend, and talks about Wragge, and Nicholson, and Cramer. On he goes, afflicting the neighbourhood with the dissonance of his unmastered instruments, till he really becomes a decent performer. He now plays a Nicholson flute, and a Cremona violin, besides which he has made some progress on the violincello, and can blow a clear and sonorous blast or two on the keyed bugle.

But is he satisfied? No; there is no point of satisfaction in music, more than in other things. Could he pour forth the full diapason of the pealing organ; were the harmonious crash of the whole orchestra under his control, he would not, he could not, rest satisfied; he must blow his bubble; he would compose like Handel, play like Purkiss, and outrival the wondrous performance of Paganini.

This is the beginning, or rather the noon-day, of his dreamy delight. But what is its end? He joins some musical society, is led into company, neglects his business, spends more than he gets, sinks into poverty, and in his old age is found playing a fiddle to the drunkards in a pot-house, for what pence he can obtain, or spending his breath on a cracked clarionet, a mendicant performer in the public streets.

Or, suppose him to have read the adventures of Robinson Crusoe, with the voyages of Captain Cook, and to have fallen in love with the sea. He has met a jack tar in his holiday clothes, and gazed with admiration on his long-quartered shoes, blue jacket, and snow-white trowsers. He has seen him pull out of his pocket, carelessly, a handful of copper, silver, gold, and pigtail tobacco. "Oh, it is a fine thing to be a sailor!" thinks he, "to wear clean clothes, to play the fiddle, to dance on the deck, and to have plenty of grog and prize money! Nothing in the world like being a sailor!"

And now comes thronging in his midnight dream—a ship's crew of light-hearted seamen, a jovial band of jack tars. He hears their songs, he sees them in their well-rigged ship, ploughing through the foaming waves, with dolphins, and porpoises, and flying-fish around them, and a clear blue sky above their heads.

He goes on blowing his bubbles till he has had enough of stormy petrels, glittering icebergs, sharks and shore-crabs, whales and walruses ; sea-weed, sword-fish, and coral rocks ; and then wrecks himself on an uninhabited island, that he may give, on his return home, a wonderful account of his dangers and his toils.

If he were the king of mighty Babylon departed, surrounded with his wise men, Chaldeans, soothsayers, and astrologers, they would give him, no doubt, a goodly interpretation of his dreams ; but being only a poor friendless lad, he cannot hope for that advantage. No matter ! when twenty summers and winters have rolled over him, he finds himself as far as ever from the ocean, retailing snuff and tobacco in a country village.

Such are the gay dreams of youth, and most of us have indulged in one or other of them. I know one who has indulged in them all ! ay more than all ! and what was the end of his sunny visions ? What has become of the gleams of glory that dazzled his youthful fancy in by-gone days ? Let the tear that has fallen on the paper on which I note down these observations, be his reply. The bubbles of his childhood are burst ; the fond dreams of his youth and his manhood are passed away ; he has seen the hollowness of them all, and has been made willing to exchange

the empty dreams of time for the realities of eternity.

If he knows anything of his own heart, there is nothing in the honours, the riches, and the wisdom of this world, that for one moment he would put in comparison with the well-grounded hope of everlasting life. Put together all the renown that mankind has to bestow ; pile up the crowns and sceptres of the earth ; heap high its gold, its costly gems, and glittering diadems, and they will be as dust in the balance, if weighed against the hope of eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

ON DESIGNS FOR PICTURES.

I WANT to address a few words to the poor and aged followers of the Redeemer.

If, therefore, you are old, and your coat be a little seedy and threadbare, or your red or brown cloak somewhat the worse for wear ; if poverty be your lot, and trial, in one shape or other, your daily food, you are the very person with whom I wish to talk, that is, if, as a Zion-bound pilgrim, your eyes are looking to the cross of the Redeemer.

Aged people should help one another along the rugged roads of life, when they have the opportunity, and a word in season is often a cordial to the heart : let me try to interest you for a moment. Are you fond of pictures ? Most people are—the child of seven, and the man and woman of seventy. I am as fond of them now as I was when for the first time in my life I opened the pages of the “ Pilgrim’s Progress,” and gazed on Christian with the burden falling from his back as he came up to the hillock on which the cross was standing.

It has often struck me, that, had I been a painter, I should have been very happy in the choice of my subjects. "Ay," you will say, "there spoke the pride of Old Humphrey." Perhaps it may be so; but you shall have a sample of some of my designs, and then you can judge for yourself. What think you of this?—

An Old Man and Death wrestling for a few grains of sand in an old hour-glass.

It is from the life, as most of my sketches are. See how the grim skeleton points his dart at the most vital parts of his enemy; and see, too, how the old man grasps the bony arm of his opponent to stay his stroke. They are grappling as though this and another world were the stakes, instead of a few grains of sand in an old hour-glass. How is it with you, my aged friends? Does this picture hit you off, think you? Is there any likeness in it? Are you clutching the hour-glass of your old age, to secure the few grains of time it contains? Are you struggling with death as with an enemy that would rob you of your dearest treasures? or are you, like Simeon of old, ready to stretch out your hands towards heaven, and say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation?" Here is another:

Hope and Faith opening the Doors of Heaven.

This would make a fine picture ; Hope smiling, with her anchor beside her, "that anchor of the soul which is both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil ;" and Faith clinging to the cross whereon once hung the Redeemer. Both of them should be seen opening the golden gates through which a flood of glory is pouring wide, affording us a peep at heaven while yet we are upon the earth.

I hope that this design suits your taste, and, if not, I trust the next will :—

Trial and Affliction taking away a purse of gold, and leaving in its place a bag of diamonds.

An odd design this ; but, if well painted, you would call it a capital good one. The poor patient, when he lost his gold, thought it was all over with him ; but see how hopeful and how happy he looks now ; he has just discovered the diamonds that have been left him.

How many a thoughtless prodigal has spent his substance in riotous living, till God in mercy has stretched him on a sick-bed, his strength has declined, and the cordials and comforts, and doctor's bills, have taken away the remainder of his money, and he considers himself lost ; but at last he discovers himself to be richer than ever. "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." "No chastening

for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous ; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” Here, then, are his diamonds—patience, experience, hope, and the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Before he was afflicted he went astray, but now he keeps the commandments of God.

You can judge of my talent for designing from three as well as from threescore specimens ; and if you think me but a poor draughtsman, why there is no necessity for my troubling you with any more of my designs.

However, look over these once more, and try if you cannot get a little real good from the imaginary sketches of Old Humphrey.

ON THE BEAUTIES OF CREATION.

I TAKE up my pen under a feeling persuasion of the almost utter impossibility of imparting to others, or even of enabling them to comprehend, my emotions, at particular seasons, when gazing on the works of creation ; and I regret this the more, because such as have feelings more lively than those of their neighbours, run some risk of being set down as enthusiasts and visionaries.

Willingly would I pass for a plain old man at all times, more prone to draw a profitable lesson from the works of creation, than to indulge in idle ecstasies and useless sentimentality ; but sometimes the boundless beauty of creation so bursts upon me, so takes me, as it were, by storm, that I cannot do otherwise than surrender up, for the moment, my whole being to the delightful occupation of feasting my eyes and my heart on the banquet before me, and of adoring the Almighty hand which has not only spread an intellectual table for me in the wilderness,

but given me a keen appetite to relish the repast.

I well know that for an old man to regard the rising or the setting sun, a passing gilt-edged cloud, a brook, a waterfall, a tree, a shrub, a bird, a butterfly, a flower, or a blade of grass, as the case may be, in a transport of delight, must, in the estimation of many, border on the ridiculous ; but Old Humphrey is one that does not often hide his natural feelings because they may furnish a little pleasantry to his friends at his expense. While the bursting bud and the warbling bird make my heart beat with joy ; while the kindling heavens bring tears of grateful emotion and admiration into my eyes ; I will tell you that they do so, and you may laugh at me as long and as loudly as you please.

It would hardly be wise in me to indulge in fairy tales, to build castles in the air for you to admire when you could not inhabit them, or to draw scenes of hanging gardens and oriental imagery far beyond your reach. No ; my scenes, for the most part, are those that are round about you. He that is blest with eyesight, and with a grateful and susceptible heart, has only to gaze on the earth or the heavens, to be filled with joy and thanksgiving.

I am a dear lover of nature, and would not,

when painting her likeness, be bribed to give a false tint to a sere leaf, nor a wrong crook to the thorn of a bramble. If I were wilfully to falsify the resemblance of the giant oak or the dwarf medlar, the towering cedar or the creeping lichen, I should feel I suppose as a man feels who has committed forgery.

It was only a few evenings ago that I stood by the side of a secluded pond. At either end of the watery basin rose an oak-tree: the one was tall and wide-spreading, the other stunted, but both gorgeous with foliage.

Between the trees was a high bank of bushes, brambles, fine long grass, and bright yellow reedy stems, among which straggled the viny tendrils of the black bryony, and the slender wires of the wild convolvulus. The whole bank was a tangled confusion, a glorious assemblage of grateful tints; rich greens and glowing browns were enlivened with scarlet hips and hawthorn berries.

While I gazed with admiration, the oblique rays of the sun enriched the pond and the bank, and the varied lights and the deep shadows gave a wondrous interest to the scene before me.

The sky, the trees, the bushes, the brambles, the straggling wires, and scarlet berries, were all plainly reflected in the clear dark waters. A dry

leaf fell, however, from the bending branches of the oak, a light breeze rippled the surface of the pond, and the whole scene became animated in the reflecting water. But my description is poor and tame. The whole was entrancingly beautiful, and I could hardly endure my emotions of joy.

I left the pond to gaze on a far more glorious scene, and to partake of a yet more exalted gratification. The sun, the brightest object in creation, was about to set.

Oh, it was glorious, in the midst of all my weakness and unworthiness, to know and to feel that I was God's creature, gifted to gaze on his beautiful creation, and to thrill with overpowering emotions at the soul-absorbing spectacle before me. To the east lay a range of murky mountainous hills, on which the dark and almost inky clouds seemed to rest, as they slowly rolled their heavy weight along the lower part of the heavens. In the south, the woods and coppices, rich with the coloured tints of autumn, were illumined with the straggling rays of the declining sun, and right in the west a big black cloud stretched itself across the sky, with edges of gold and silver, bright even to intensity. Behind the cloud was ensconced the sun, flinging right and left, above and below, his glittering beams. I clasped my hands with transport, and while I gazed on the

glowing scene in an ecstasy, the sun burst forth below the dark cloud, pouring his unendurable beams in a torrent of light full in my face, blinding for a season the enthusiastic idolater who was so engrossed in admiring the king of day, as almost to forget his Almighty Maker, the King of kings and Lord of lords!

Silent, solemn, and sublime was that glorious and gorgeous spectacle. Subdued, even to tears, I faltered a prayer to the Father of mercies, that while his glorious creation produced such entrancing emotions of wonder and joy in my heart, his grace might fit me, despite of all my unworthiness, to discern the greater glories of redemption, so that I might know him, and adore him, and love him, and obey him, and rejoice in him more and more for ever and ever!

TO THE YOUNG LADIES OF AN EXTENSIVE ESTABLISHMENT.

MY UNKNOWN YOUNG FRIENDS—How shall I address you whom I have never seen, and, most likely, never shall see, having no knowledge of your tastes, your habits, or your dispositions ? Flatter you I will not ; for thereby should I prove myself to be your enemy : judge you with severity I dare not ; for by so doing I should condemn myself. It has been whispered to me that you read my papers, and thus a desire has arisen in my heart to say a few words to you.

Youth is usually cheerful, and I dare say that you are so ; but if I write lightly, I may offend the sedate ; and should I express myself very gravely, the cheerful will have no fellowship with me ; they will say, “ We thought the old gentleman wore a smile on his face, and a blooming bouquet in his bosom ; but instead of this, he writes as though he had been gathering crabs, drinking a

draught of vinegar, and dipping his pen in mingled wormwood and gall."

Again, if I write a long letter, some of you may accuse me of being a tiresome, garrulous, gossiping old man; and if I write you a short one, "Oh! oh!" you may say; "Is this his letter? Why it is not worth the trouble he has taken to write it." So, take what course I will, my path, you see, is beset with difficulty. However, I will now tell you the way I shall proceed. That which comes uppermost in my mind shall be freely written in a kindly spirit, without my making it an object to be either very gay or very grave; very short or very long; very wise, or in a word, very any thing; giving you credit for sufficient good humour and kindness to put the best possible construction you can on my communication.

You know that it is the privilege of old men to look very wise; to shake their heads at young people, and to talk very gravely to them, pointing out how changed the world is to what it was, and how differently young folks used to act fifty summers ago to what they do now. And you know, too, that while an old man is thus occupied, young people try their best to look grave, for which laudable effort they consider themselves at liberty, the moment they are left alone, to

indulge in a good-humoured titter at the old gentleman's odd thoughts, odd words, or odd appearance. If you do not know all this, I do.

Well, you may laugh at me as long and as loudly as you please, provided it be a good-natured laugh, and provided also, that you will try to remember any little piece of advice I may give, which may be likely to do you good.

Not yet have I forgotten my school-days. My schoolmaster was ill-informed, hasty, and unreasonably severe; but my schoolmistress was considerate and very kind. She used to stand at one end of the school, and address us in an affectionate manner. I was then young; and now, though so many years have been added to my days, I have not forgotten her soft, musical voice, nor the lessons of instruction she endeavoured to impress on our minds.

Now, thus it will be with some of you in future years! When he who now addresses you may be, through mercy, in a better world, you will recall your youthful days, assemble your schoolfellows once more together in your thoughts, and live over again your present pursuits. You will then feel gratification from what you remember of the admonitions of your kind instructors, mingled with regret that you have remembered so little.

And now, to what are you looking forward ? Is the fair future glowing with rainbow hues ? Oh, what a goodly world is this, when fancy, and hope, and expectation, have to draw its picture !

The waving trees and fairy bowers,
The verdant fields and fruits and flowers,
The sparkling rills and bubbling fountains,
Fair vales, and heaven-aspiring mountains,

are all placed so conspicuously, covered over with a bonny blue sky, and so lit up with sunshine that neither the eye nor the heart suspects that there is any thing like shadow beyond them ; but for all this, my young friends, there are shadows in the world !

Think not that Old Humphrey is the man to blight your prospects ; rudely to dash from your hands the cup of pleasure ; or to drive away the smile from your faces. Rather would he put sunshine into your bosoms than take it away : but he is not, now, writing to please you, so much as to do you good ; let him, then, speak the truth in sincerity and kindness.

Mankind have been running after earthly happiness from the days of old, and they are still keeping up the chase. I have run after it myself as hard as my neighbours, and have found myself as far behind. If one thing more than

another can assume different shapes, it is the phantom we pursue that we take for happiness.

Earthly happiness is sought by all. The sage pursues it in his books and reflections; the savage discerns it in the wilderness; the prince views it sparkling in a crown; the peasant beholds it in abundant crops of grain; the sailor sees it in the ocean; the soldier hears it in the stormy fight; and the school-boy and school-girl hope to find it in a holiday.

If I could peep into your hearts, from the youngest of you to the oldest, what a medley should I find there of visionary things laid up in store to make you happy! Waxen dolls and birth-day presents; glowing hopes and pleasant holidays; young friends and old acquaintances; joyous scenes and family gatherings; satin dresses and kid gloves; journeys and jubilees; sunbeams and silvery clouds! I would not, if I could, take away your enjoyments; but I must whisper the wish that they may be under control.

We all love to pluck the fairest fruit, and to gather the sweetest flowers; but put this down as a truth worthy to be graven on a pillar of brass—That more enjoyable fruits and flowers grow by the wayside of the path of duty, than in all the wilderness of wilful inclination.

We all set a value on riches; but Mexico

is a long way off, and its gold is hard to gain ; the Bible, a far richer source of real wealth, is at hand. I will point out two texts that are worth a hundred Mexicos :—“God is love,” 1 John iv. 8. “Christ died for the ungodly,” Rom. v. 6.

Willingly would I write more ; but time presses, and I must hurry on to the end of my remarks. Though I cannot make you happy, I can commend you to Him who has all happiness at his disposal. I can ask of him to bless you with true knowledge, and to keep you from evil ; yea, to guide you by his counsel, and afterwards to receive you to glory.

Old Humphrey is, usually, cheerful as the day, and he loves to throw around him an air of cheerfulness wherever he goes ; but with all his light-heartedness, and in the midst of all his infirmities, he considers this world as nothing without the well-grounded hope of a better. Were you to place him on the rack ; fling him beneath the wheels of Juggernaut ; yea, grind him to powder between the upper and nether mill-stone ; you would not even then crush out of him the joyous hope of everlasting life through the Saviour of sinners !

This is not such a letter as I intended to write ; but give me credit for feeling more kind-

ness and interest in your real welfare than I have expressed, and believe me to be, my unknown young friends, yours in the very spirit of sincerity and kindness,

OLD HUMPHREY.

ON EXPERIENCE.

IT is almost impossible for a man to live to grey hairs without passing through a great variety of scenes, and being placed in a great variety of situations. It is this circumstance, in connexion with others, that constitutes the difference between the experience of youth and age. The young, however excellent their talents and extended their attainments, having witnessed fewer scenes, and acted in a less variety of situations, must be, comparatively, deficient in the knowledge of life. The fresh recruit may be active and strong, and after a little practice become expert at his warlike weapons ; but his military knowledge is not like that of the old campaigner.

Though my own life has had as little of a striking kind to diversify it, perhaps, as the lives of my neighbours, yet, when I bring to one point the scenes through which I have passed, and the situations in which I have been placed, they present a somewhat formidable array, and force upon me the regret that they have not made me wiser and

better, and much more humble, considerate, forbearing, and thankful than I am. Now, if, reader, yours is the furrowed brow and the grey hair, most likely your experience has been somewhat like my own. Let me, then, give a glance at the past, for it may be that our mutual reflections thereon may be attended with advantage. I am not a dweller on things of this kind ; a hasty glance, a rapid review, a dash or two of my pen on the several points to which I may refer, will be all that I shall offer. By putting myself in the attitude of a questioner, the end I have in view will be the more easily attained.

Have you been one of a happy party when the bells of the church tower have rung a merry peal, and when the gay garlanded bride has stepped lightly from her carriage at the church gates? Has she hung on your arm, and have you given her to the rejoicing bridegroom at the altar, and ejaculated a prayer that the presence of the Holy One might rest upon them, blessing them in their basket and in their store, their going out and coming in, from thenceforth and for ever ?

When the flesh and heart of the aged pilgrim has failed him, and he has given up the ghost, his soul magnifying the Lord, and his spirit rejoicing in God his Saviour, have you been there ? And have you frequently followed the plumed

hearse in sorrowful procession to the house appointed for all living, when the deep drawn sigh, the streaming tears, and the bursting sob of the bereaved mourner have lamented the loss of a beloved companion ?

Have you banqueted in the festive hall, and made a meal in the fields of the fruit of the bramble ? Have you talked with the simple, and conversed with the wise ? Have you marked the ways of the evil, and companionized with the good ? Have you read the argument of the infidel with displeasure, and pondered the pages of Holy Writ till your heart exulted in the Lamb that was slain, and your hope mounted to the throne of the Eternal ?

Have you stepped out of your accustomed pathway to go in search of tribulation ? There are hospital scenes, common-place enough to those who frequent them, but fearful to the eye and trying to the sympathies of a stranger, if the milk of human kindness flow within his veins. There ague shakes her bed ; pain grinds his teeth ; consumption who has painted her marble cheek, as in sport, with a patch of red, quickly draws her breath ; fever licks his parched lip with his furry tongue ; and bloated dropsy—but enough. I will not dwell upon the scene.

Have you drawn aside the veil that hides the

most afflictive of human spectacles ? There are asylums for mental maladies ; but not willingly would I trust myself to describe them. Were I to be fanciful you would be misled ; and were I faithful, you, as well as I, would be afflicted. I would only put the question, Have you seen humanity in this depth of its humiliation ?

Have you assisted in extinguishing fires, when the bellowing flame and blazing rafters have been fearful to hear and to see ? Have you lent a willing hand in taking the drowned from the waters, and recovering their suspended faculties ? Have you helped to bind up the fractured bones of such as have met with frightful accidents ? Have you witnessed the amputation of diseased limbs ? Have you gazed on sufferers who have lost their lives by explosion, and sighed over those who have died by their own hands ?

Have you travelled on foot and on horseback ? by gig, coach, diligence, carriage, rail-road, and steam-boat ? Have you seen the wonders of nature and art, and clasped your hands together in thankfulness to the Father of mercies, for the gift of sight ? Have you climbed the craggy mountain, and descended the dangerous mine ? Has the dark cavern been explored by you ; and when the black-winged storm has been abroad, have you been on the angry ocean ?

Have you attended the senate, listening to the speeches of the legislators of your country ? drunk in with delighted ears the message of mercy proclaimed by the ministers of God's mysteries from the pulpit? and visited the courts of justice, where the injured sought redress, and the guilty felon trembled?—have you seen the judge put his black cap upon his head, and heard him pronounce the sentence of death, while the convicted, horror-struck malefactor has covered his face with his hands at the bar, the big drops of agony rolling from his pallid brow, and trickling through his bony fingers? Have you watched him through all the gradations of hardihood, hope, fear, and despair?

Have you known health and sickness ; strength and weakness ; youth, manhood, and age ? Have you made and lost friends ? Have you been praised and blamed ? Have you abounded, and known need ; lent and borrowed ; sinned and sorrowed ; succeeded without effort ; and, after striving to the uttermost, met with disappointment ?

Have you witnessed sudden changes among men—the favourite of the public being dismissed, and the obscure becoming popular ? the weak gaining strength, and the strong waxing feeble ? the rich becoming poor, and the poor amassing

wealth? Have you seen the mighty pulled down from their seat, and the humble and meek exalted? Have you known wicked men, by God's grace, turn from their wickedness, and good men, through want of watchfulness, fall into temptation?

Have you lived in town and country; fared sumptuously, and been content with the plainest food? Have you been separated from those you respected, bereaved of those you loved? Have your hopes been realized, and blighted; and has the dark cloud above you passed by, leaving the sunbeam shining on your head, and thankfulness glowing in your heart? Have you found that the whole world would not make you happy without God's grace, and that with his presence and blessing you could cheerfully endure the heaviest calamities?

Have you joined the acclamations of a crowd, and pondered alone in the silence of solitude? Have you known the upbraiding of your own heart, and heard the still small voice of an approving conscience? Have you been humbled to the dust by a knowledge of your unworthiness, and exalted above measure by a sense of the love of the Redeemer? Have you shrunk, in your fear, from a trifling trouble; and been ready, in the abundance of your faith, to play the martyr in the fire.

Thus might I go on, without limit, to catechise you and myself; but it will be wiser to come to a close. If we have seen, known, and been familiar with these things, how desirous should we be to turn our knowledge and experience to good account! If we have been dealt graciously with, how grateful should we be to the Giver of all good! If we have been convinced of our own errors and infirmities, how humbly should we carry ourselves, and how forbearing should we be towards others! If we have seen the uncertainty and hollowness of earthly things, how lightly should we regard them; and if we have known and felt the peace arising from spiritual and heavenly blessings, how prayerfully, ardently, and perseveringly should we pursue them!

Then fix, my soul, on things above,
Thy stedfast hope and glowing love.

ON EARTHLY TRIALS.

I suppose, with regard to the love of rural scenery, it is much the same with my neighbours as with myself; for among the endless variety, the countless grades and shades of disposition among mankind, every one breathes the fresh air of heaven with pleasure; every one gazes on the beauties of creation with some degree of delight.

The spring and summer breezes always set my heart beating. They make me long to be wandering on the furze-clad common, to linger on the skirt of the coppice, and to gather primroses in the secluded dell. The spirit of the country seems to beckon me abroad, and I cannot help revelling in my fancy among knolly green fields and retired lanes, woods, and waterfalls.

When Old Humphrey is once surrounded by elms, gnarled oaks, hedges, and rural scenes, rich with vegetation, furze, broom, and blackberry brier, chickweed, hayriff, thistle, nettletop, and dandelion; when the mossy green grass is cool under his feet, and the sunlit clouds are bright

above his head, his heart dances for joy. All things around him are then felt, indeed, to be the gifts of God, and he pants, as the hart after the water brooks, to show forth his thankfulness.

No wonder, when spring and summer bring out the verdure and beauty of shrubs and flowers; when they wake the insect tribes to animated life, and call forth the song of joy from the warbling birds, that the heart of man should join the jubilee of creation. Again I say, when the breezes of spring and summer blow, the spirit of the country beckons me abroad.

It was at an early hour the other day that I wandered forth, enjoying the wondrous beauty of the earth and skies. I turned along a retired path, a sort of bridle-way, but little used, except by the owners of the adjoining fields, and by a band of bird-catchers, who have been long accustomed to lime their twigs, to place their cages, and to spread their nets there. Now and then, a solitary rambler, like myself, may be seen with a book in his hand, seeking the privacy that the place affords; but with these exceptions, the spot is little frequented; no wonder that the green grass flourishes there in abundance.

In this secluded place, an ass and a horse were grazing. The ass, poor thing, was blind, and the horse seemed to be as heavily afflicted as his

lowly companion. No doubt he was the wreck of what he had once been ; he had neighed and snorted, and arched his proud neck, in his time, and rattled over the ground at a rapid rate. He had, doubtless, been petted and patted, and curry-combed, and corned, as horses are when they possess beauty, when their necks are clothed with thunder, and their hoofs are shod with speed ; but these things were all over with him. The summer of his life was gone, and his high hips, broken knees, rueful coat, and ribs that might be counted, told a sorrowful tale.

I stood for some time looking at him, as he eagerly tore away the fresh grass from the green turf ; but it was neither his high hips, his broken knees, his bare ribs, nor his rueful coat that made me gaze on him with interest. One of his hind legs was sorely diseased. Whether occasioned by ill-usage, hard work, or accident, I cannot say ; but he could not set his foot to the ground. Even while he was grazing, he kept raising his diseased limb to an unusual height, evidently in a state of suffering ; hardly could he limp forward when he had closely cropped the herbage within his reach ; and when he did so, he laid back his ears, showed the white of his eyes, and exposed his fore teeth, in a way that spoke eloquently of pain. Poor wretch !

thought I ; but his days are numbered, his trials are almost over. It is but for a time. *It will not be so always.*

The poor animal, it is true, had only bodily pain to endure : he had no wants to provide for, no yearnings after life, at least I suppose not, and no fearful forebodings of death ; and therefore he was mercifully dealt with in the midst of his misery ; but the only solid satisfaction that I could fall back upon was what I have already expressed—the reflection, *It will not be so always.*

This little incident set me thinking on the sorrows of the animal creation, and then on the afflictions of mankind. It was not in a merely sentimental mood that I mused on human trials. No ! a strong spirit of affection for my species, of tender compassion for all that mourn, came over me, and my heart yearned to pour oil and balm into the wounds of the stricken, and to bind up all that were bruised and broken.

Why there should be so much sin and suffering in the world has been a puzzling question to many a wiser head than mine. This is a shadowy page in God's providence, that I have pondered with pain. I have mused and mourned over it, and blurred and blotted it with my tears. There are gracious passages in the word of God, however, that throw some light on this dark subject, though

it is sometimes awfully mysterious ; and there is much consolation afforded to my mind by the conviction, *It will not be so always.*

Always ! no ! Time is but a span, a speck ; and the gloom of the Christian will give way to glory. Shadows shall be exchanged for sunshine, pain for pleasure, and temporary grief for eternal joy. If we only believed in the realities of eternity with the same undoubting confidence that we feel as we gaze on the things of sense, then might we smile at calamity, and rejoice in tribulation.

But there is such a thing (I speak feelingly) as being weak in faith. It is well, therefore, to have a few strong points in creation and revelation to fall back upon in seasons of infirmity. When we doubt the power of God, we should gaze on the sun and the moon suspended in the air, and ask if aught but almighty power could hang and uphold them there. And when we doubt the mercy and grace of the Redeemer, we should read over again and again these heart-sustaining texts : " This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," 1 Tim. i. 15 ; " He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him," Heb. vii. 25.

Far be it from me to draw away the heart of any Christian mourner from the blessed promises

contained in the Holy Scriptures ; these ought to be meat and drink, a refreshing draught and a sustaining cordial to us all ; but sometimes a simple, short observation, though lisped by a stammering tongue, or written by a very indifferent scribe, may be of service. If then you happen to be afflicted, perhaps you will dwell with me for a moment on the words, *It will not be so always.*

There are very few of God's people who have not some open or some secret affliction ; for the words, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," John xvi. 33, are not a figure of speech, but a literal truth. A man may have hidden troubles, as well as hidden treasures, in his strong box, that no one knows of but himself ; and this may be your case. We conceal our infirmities and our afflictions, oftentimes, more jealously than we hide our money bags.

Are they not animating words to say to the blind : "Cheer up fellow-pilgrim, for your eyes are about to be opened ?" To the lame : "Take courage, the use of your limbs will be soon restored, and you will be enabled to run without weariness, and to walk without fainting ? Are they not enough to make the one and the other sing for joy ? Why, then, should not you sing ?" "The time is short ;" "the kingdom of heaven is at hand ;" you are in trial, but *It will not be so always.*

Whether you are afflicted in the sight or the sinews, the head or the heel; whether you are groping as the poor ass, hobbling about like the poor horse, or not even able to hobble at all, no matter. Whatever may be your troubles, whether afflicted in mind, body, or estate, take courage, I say, *It will not be so always.*

What are our troubles of yesterday to us to-day? And what will those of to-day be to us to-morrow? But you may think that your troubles are peculiar. Well, what of that? God's people are a peculiar people, and have peculiar support; no wonder that their troubles should be peculiar also. Dwell not upon them, but look forward to peculiar joys. These light afflictions — heavy though we think them — spring not forth of the dust. They are weighed in the balance, and are not a scruple too light or too heavy for your taste. Whether for a moment,

“The heart is mournful, or with rapture glows,
Love holds the scale that metes our joys and woes.”

Bear then, your afflictions patiently, submissively, acquiescently: your trouble may be weighty, but *It will not be so always.*

If we did but know what our afflictions defend us from, as well as we know what they bring upon us, we should be more reconciled to have them for companions. They may give us pain, and yet be

so blessed as to afford us peace. They may give a gloom to time, and yet impart a glory to eternity. I have some friends now, whose afflictions I put into my prayers; not that they may be removed, for that might or might not be a blessing; but that they may be among the "all things" that work together for the good of God's people.

When I began these homely observations, I hoped to make them better worth your acceptance, but I have found, before now, to my mortification, that strong sympathy has oftentimes none but very weak language at its command. You must give me credit for my thoughts being better than my words; and taking what comfort you can under your afflictions, from the remembrance that *It will not be so always*, look steadily, hopefully, and trustfully to the God of all consolation, who hath said, "Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs I will carry you," Isa xlvi. 4. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5.

ON STRONG EMOTIONS.

THERE are some who pass through the changing scenes of life with the same moderate excitement as that with which they go through the changing seasons of the year. They feel joy, and experience sorrow; but their emotions are not strong, and rarely is a tear of rapture, or of grief, seen glittering in their eyes. This is no doubt the case with, by far, the greater part of mankind.

There are others, of a more susceptible sort, more tremblingly alive to the touch of pleasure and pain, of joy and grief; and these manifest stronger emotions. Whether it be an advantage, or the contrary, to possess keen sensibility and strong emotions, is a question on which different opinions are entertained; but all will, perhaps, agree in this, that strong feelings should ever be subject to strong control. For myself, I am subject to strong excitement; let me question how it is with you. I will try you on many points. Should you ask me what advantages will be de-

rived from my questionings, it may be, that I shall hardly be prepared with an answer; but it suits the feeling of the moment; and therefore, as I wish, at one time or other, to have a word with all kinds of readers, let an old man have his way.

Have you, with mysterious joy, held communion with the elements, walked abroad with the winds, and gazed on the glowing creation, as on the gift of God? Have you looked on a leaf and a flower, until your heart has leaped with transport? Have you fixed your enraptured eyes on the silvery clouds of heaven, till they appeared to be angels' thrones ranged round the celestial sanctuary of the Eternal? Have you listened to the blustering blast whirling through the forest trees, till it has seemed laden with mysterious and dear delight? Has your bosom heaved with undefinable sublimity, when the brooding tempest has hovered in the heavens till you have yearned for the climax, the descending deluge, the earth-shaking roar of the thunder, and the soul-arresting fiery flash of the living lightning?

Have you, "afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted," burdened with care, and bowed down with a sense of your unworthiness, ever opened the word of God, yearning after consolation, as the hart thirsteth after the water

brooks? And have you ever, in such a case, found the words of eternal life as balm and wine to you ; oil to your joints and marrow to your bones ?

Have you known the agony of a parting moment, bending a lingering gaze on some loved object, dearer than all the earth besides, about to bid you farewell for years ? Have you caught the last look, and followed the fading form, until, dimly despaired, it has at last disappeared in the distance, leaving you

“Alone! alone! all, all alone!”

in a cold and cheerless world, reft of joy, and refusing to be comforted ?

Have you walked abroad when the all-glorious sun has shined, not on your path only, but into your soul ; when, careering like a conquering king, in his flaming chariot, gorgeously attired in purple and gold, your mind has been filled with transport and you have clasped your hands together, and lifted up your heart to his and your adorable Creator, with emotions which words could not express ? Have you gazed on the moon and stars, till the beauty and immensity of God’s glowing creation has filled to overflowing the measure of your joy ; and have the words been wrung from your heart, “O Lord, open

thou my lips: and my mouth shall show forth thy praise?"

Have you known trouble, until the earth has appeared brass, and the heavens iron? Have you felt so utterly destitute as to be in love with calamity, willingly hardening your heart, and sternly determining to suppress every pleasant emotion? And have you, with all the contrition, humility, and simplicity of a child, committed your ways to the High and Holy One that he might direct your paths?

Have you felt in your bosom envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness? Has your heart glowed with affection for mankind, and have you looked around you to do a deed of kindness; improving all your own means, and longing for wealth and power that you might scatter happiness far and near?

Have you, in your Christian pilgrimage, been shut up in Doubting Castle, calling in question the plainest truths, tempted in your own heart to say with the fool, "There is no God?" And have you known such a flood of faith come over you, that you could have laid down your life, yea "played the man in the fire," to bear testimony to the truth of the ever-blessed gospel of Jesus Christ?

If you have known these things, you are no

stranger to strong emotions, and will agree with me, that they ought ever to be placed under strong control. I have, as it were, but just entered on my subject ; you may, perhaps, pursue it with some advantage.

ON THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN.

AN hour ago, I was gazing on the setting sun. It was not lost to human vision in its own unendurable splendour. It flung not around, on earth and heaven, insufferable beams of brightness, banishing and interdicting the eye from an admiring participation of its visible glories ; nor yet did it light up and gild the skirts of a gorgeous retinue of accompanying clouds. Hanging in mid air, like the shield of a warrior, intelligible to the sight, the dull, red orb gradually approached the horizon.

Often have I gazed (who has not?) on the declining sun, till my eyes have swam in tears, and my heart dissolved within me in silent ecstasy at its overpowering magnificence ; but in this instance it was delightful, unblinded by its beams, to watch its perceptible withdrawal from the world.

As I stood rooted to the spot, the huge red orb entered a coal-black cloud that lay beneath it. A third of it was soon gone ; a half of it disappeared

as if severed by an Almighty hand, a moiety only being left to illuminate the skies. Still lower it descended, till the rim of it alone was visible ; and then rushed upon me the arresting thought, which had before occurred, that the united power of men and angels could not, for an instant, arrest its course. Had a moment been wanting, in which to offer an effectual prayer for the pardon of individual transgression, or the eternal welfare of a sinful world, it could not have been obtained. How invaluable to me did even a moment of that time appear, which, by hours, and days, and months, and years we are wasting as a thing of nought.

“ We toil and spend our lives for trifles vain,
And waste what worlds of wealth could ne’er obtain.”

Accustomed as I am, when opportunity allows, to watch, with an intensity of interest, the sun going down in the skies, it would be hard for me to impart to you my emotions, when it was made known to me that an aged New Zealand chief had cried out in his own emphatic language, when the probability of sending out missionaries to New Zealand had been intimated to him, “ Make haste ! my sun is fast going down.” I saw in my fancy, the fierce, the treacherous, the man-devouring savage : the ignorant, the implacable, and cruel cannibal, whom God had made willing, in

the day of his power, to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ, standing amid his brother warriors, tattooed with frightful forms, and besmeared with grease and red ochre, raising aloud, not the wild cry of his native woods, but the brotherly appeal to Christian men, "Come over and help us, and come quickly; make haste, for my sun is fast going down!"

This affecting appeal on behalf of the old warrior, who had, no doubt, in his time, felled many a human being with his mery (club) and his tomahawk, and perhaps banqueted afterwards on his flesh; this cry for mercy from the merciless, whose stony heart had been softened by Divine power, struck me very forcibly; and when I reflected, that, not unlikely, his brow had on it even more wrinkles than my own, the case appeared urgent; time was flying, and I thought of the angel which stood upon the sea, and upon the earth, and lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer, Rev. x. 5, 6. I seemed bound to profit by the voice from the South Pacific Ocean, to take up the cry of the subdued savage, in my own case, and to speak thus within

my own heart ; “ Whatever I have to say, let me say it : whatever I have to do, let me do it ; time presses, and will not allow me to loiter any longer ! let me make haste, for my sun is fast going down.”

It may be that these remarks, now dribbling from my pen, will be read by those who have numbered more years than Old Humphrey ; and if so, take it not unkind, my aged friends, that he should include you, as well as himself, in a few free and friendly observations. Seeing that we have no time to spare, it may not be amiss to consider for a moment, the errors and infirmities of age, with a view of avoiding, as much as we can, the one ; and of manifesting, as little as we can, the other.

It is said that aged people are too often opinionated, and not sufficiently considerate towards the buoyant spirits and inexperience of youth ; that they are apt to think, because they are aged, they must of necessity be wise, and are thus led to become dogmatical, and even obstinate. Though these are heavy charges, yet I really am afraid that they are not unfounded. How it may be with you I cannot tell, but often do I find myself in the attitude of too angrily rebuking the thoughtlessness of the young, when a spirit of forbearance would more become me ; and of too tenaciously

supporting my own opinion, when it has been but little entitled to consideration.

Aged people are said, also, to be testy and crabbed, showing more churlishness than kind-heartedness ; they are accused, too, of penuriousness, and sometimes of great negligence in their habits, and in giving trouble to those around them ; but instead of dwelling on points which may, more or less, affect us, let me advert to one in which, I fear, we are all implicated. We do not, by our words and deeds, leave a general impression, that we are sensible of the value of time ; we do not say, emphatically, by our prevailing spirit, "We see the emptiness of earthly things ; we are seeking after a heavenly inheritance ; we are standing on the confines of an eternal world ; we have no time to spare ; we feel that we must make haste, for our sun is fast going down."

Can we wonder that the mature and the young should not be impressed with the brevity and fading nature of human life, when tottering and grey-haired age, leaning on his staff, is seen trifling away time as a thing of nought, and calculating on future years as confidently as though he had but just entered his teens ? The warning voice that has reached us, my aged friends, may have some effect in awakening us to a sense of our

real position. It seems to say, however praiseworthy our designs, however excellent our objects, they will be altogether useless if deferred.

“ Time, like an urgent charioteer,
With winged steeds flies through the year.”

The clouds above our heads are flitting through the skies ; the ground beneath our feet is rapidly crumbling away. Morning, noon, and night, tread on each other’s heels. The “ time is short.” “ Make haste ! ” said the aged chief, “ make haste, for my sun is fast going down.”

But though I thus speak to those of many days, yet have I a word for the smooth brow and the ruddy cheek ; for the bright eye, the fair form, and the manly frame. In the days of my youth, an aged oak, hollow, blighted, and almost leafless, stood on a rising ground ; and beside it grew a sapling, green and flourishing. I left them side by side, and returned not to the place till fifteen summers and winters had passed away. And was the old oak gone ? Had the sapling become a stately tree ? No ! there stood the hollow oak as in my younger days ; but the place that knew the sapling knew it no more. Thus has it been with Old Humphrey ! Thus has he been mercifully preserved, while the young around him have fallen in the dust. Receive, then, the lesson

of instruction that his pen is endeavouring to convey. Reflect on the uncertainty of time; attend, without delay, to the things of eternity, and ponder on the arresting words of the New Zealander, "Make haste, for my sun is fast going down."

What a humbling thing it is to be shorn of your strength just at the moment when you most require it! To find yourself weak as infancy, while you yearn for the force of a giant. When I took up my pen, I felt like a mighty man clothed with power. I thought that I could, on this subject, be truly eloquent; but how has the gold of my thoughts "become dim!" how has the most fine gold of my imagination become "changed!" Much did I undertake, little indeed have I accomplished; and fain am I now, making a virtue of necessity, to draw from my very helplessness a strong and convincing illustration. If, when full of arduous and high-wrought energy, we cannot always secure the object we have in view, how shall we hope to attain it by supineness and neglect?

Be in earnest, then, my friends, whether you have but lately entered the race that is set before you, or are nearly approaching the goal. What your hands and your heart find to do, do it with all your might; hesitate not, trifle not, delay not;

boast not of to-morrow, you know not what a day may bring forth : " Make haste ! for your sun is fast going down."

What odd whims, what strange thoughts, at times, come into the mind ? It is said that

" A raven once an acorn took,
From Basan's tallest, stoutest tree,
And laid it near a limpid brook,
And lived another oak to see."

And here am I, pleasing myself with the thought, that Old Humphrey, by taking this cry of the aged chieftain, this New Zealand acorn, and planting it in your mind and memory, may, even yet, live to see it spring up to God's glory. Smile, if you will, at the oddity of my conceit ; things more unlikely to happen have taken place ; but however this may be, the lowly disciple of the Redeemer, the humble and grateful believer in the gospel of Christ, will not fail to be struck with this fresh proof that " the ways of God are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts."

Here is an uneducated heathen, one who, if he have followed the custom of his tribe, has lived in a rude hut of twigs and grass, clothed himself with mats and rushes, cut his hair with oyster shells, ruthlessly slain his foe with his hennee (halberd) and patoo (battle-axe,) drinking

his blood, and feasting on his flesh. Here is he, his heart humbled by the power of the gospel, uttering a cry resounding like a trumpet in Christian ears—a cry that appeals to us all. We know that our life is “even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” We know, too, that “there is but a step between us and death,” and yet, knowing these things, we still require to be reminded of them. Oh, let the voice from New Zealand be drunk in, not by our ears only, but by our hearts, and let our language be, “Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days ; satisfy me early with thy mercy, and give me to rejoice in thy salvation.” Tarry not ; come quickly ; “Make haste ! for my sun is fast going down.”

ON TRACTS.

AMONG the unnumbered recreations which the Giver of all good has placed within the reach of the man of years, the pilgrim far advanced in this world's thorny path, few afford me more real enjoyment than the practice of moving unobtrusively among my fellow-men ; of seeing, without, as it were, being seen ; observing, without being observed ; and of picking up such fragments of character and information, as are not only curious and interesting in themselves, but also, capable of being turned to good account. There is a quiet revelling of the heart in such cases, that is not the less enjoyed because it is unseen. Oh, what a treasure-house is a cheerful spirit ! What a source of unlimited enjoyment is a love of character !

One half the shrewd sentences, the odd conceits, the pithy sayings, the humorous remarks, the striking observations, and the arresting reflections that I have picked up in my rambles among men, would make a volume of no common

size, and, I could almost persuade myself, of no ordinary interest. The wallet of the beggar contains not a greater diversity of scraps and oddments than may be found in the loose fragmentary papers of Old Humphrey.

It is an excellent thing, in going through the world, to know for what we are fit; this knowledge is of very extensive use, and the want of it leads to very great irregularity; would that I had known something of it in my earlier days!

Some men appear made for their position, so much so, that if, in God's good providence, they were to be removed from it, you might search far before you could find a suitable person to fill up the void occasioned by their absence. On the other hand, there are those who appear as much out of place in their calling, as a merry-andrew would be in a pulpit, or a chimney-sweep in a baker's shop.

Some men have natural gifts befitting them for particular undertakings, and others have acquired attainments which render them equally efficient. When this is the case, keep every one in his proper place; the blacksmith to his hammer, the coachman to his whip, the surgeon to his lancet, and all will go well; but if we put the surgeon's lancet in the hand of the blacksmith, and the blacksmith's hammer in the hands of the surgeon,

what a pretty piece of business do we make of it! Again I say, it is a good thing to know for what we are fit, and for what we are unfit. And also to remember, that from the changes in ourselves, and in circumstances around us, what we may be very fit for at one time, we may be very unfit for at another.

It is now the practice of many Christians to distribute tracts to their poorer neighbours, to the young, to the passer-by, and to all classes likely to be profited thereby; tens of thousands of printed monitors have thus been sent abroad in the world, and it would be hard to say the amount of good which has been done by these unobtrusive heralds of peace, these little messengers of mercy; but I have been struck by the different qualifications of tract distributors: some have appeared fit, and some very unfit, for what they have undertaken.

Good men have not all amiable tempers, or polite manners—the more is the pity; for the abrupt behaviour, the forbidding brow, and the rebuking tongue of a Christian man, are sad hindrances to his usefulness. There are some men that you can love at once, and there are others with whom you would hardly like to be left alone. I could point out those who, in giving away a dozen tracts, would make a dozen friends,

and I could point out those also, who, in performing the same service, would make almost as many enemies.

It is always a pity when a good deed is done in a bad way. Christians should be mindful of their tempers and habits, and Christian tract distributors should remember that *they* are read, as well as the tracts they circulate.

It has occurred to me, that if we all made a practice of carrying about with us suitable tracts, for our own especial use, as well as for the use of others, it would go far in fitting us to discharge our duties in the best manner. What say you to the plan?

Now do not suppose that I am recommending what will trespass on your pockets. Do not be alarmed for your gold or your silver; not a single penny am I requiring you to lay out. The tracts that I wish to recommend are not of a common kind. They are not printed on paper with types; nor adorned with a wood-cut; nor stitched with needle and thread; yet have they some especial advantages, a few of which I will describe.

They will not cost you the value of even a farthing; they will take up no room in your pockets: they will not be injured by being carried about with you; they will rather be improved than

damaged by use ; they may be read without spectacles, and they are suited to every place, and to all occasions.

I might recommend a hundred of these tracts to you ; but there is such a thing as overdoing a matter ; half-a-dozen of the most striking of them will be enough for me to speak of on the present occasion.

The first tract that I advise you always to have about you is, that of a *kind-hearted, cheerful disposition*. This will not only contribute to your own happiness, but render you a welcome visitor in every habitation. Like a sunbeam, it will throw a light on every spot. It will give a double value to the words you speak, and the deeds you perform. It will mitigate pain, dissipate gloom, remove care, and impart consolation ; it will do much towards conciliating your bitterest enemies, if you have any such, and it will bind you closer to your dearest friends. With this in your possession, you may win your way to the hearts of the young and the old, the ignorant and the wise, for it is a pioneer that will prepare you a road for usefulness, making many a crooked path straight and many a rough place plain. If you have this tract, undertakings will be very easy which otherwise would be very hard ; and if you have it not, even though you have all other tracts

in the world, enterprises will be very hard which would otherwise be very easy. One single copy of this useful and agreeable tract is worth a king's crown.

The second tract that I recommend is, *a spirit of love*. This is, indeed, of inestimable value. Oh, what a glorious description of it is to be found in the 13th chapter of the First of Corinthians, wherein the apostle says, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, (or love,) I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal !”

The apostle knew well the great worth of this spirit, otherwise he would never have exclaimed, “Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing !” Let me advise you to read over the apostle's description ; it will be better for you to read it in the Holy Scriptures, than to read it copied out by the aged hand that is now noting down these remarks.

If you have not got a copy of this tract, try your best, and leave no effort untried to obtain one. It would be cheap at any price, if you could buy it ; but you cannot do that. Close not your eyes in slumber, and allow no rest for the sole of your foot, till you do something towards

obtaining it. Pray, watch, and strive for it, every day. If you succeed, all bitterness of spirit, all envy, and hatred, and malice, and uncharitableness, will be driven away from your heart. You will, then, be able to look on your fellow sinners with pity, compassion, and tenderness, and to put up for your deadliest enemies that beautiful prayer of the Redeemer, “Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.” Again, I say, if it be possible, carry this tract with you every where, to calm the ruffled spirits of others, and to shed peace and tranquillity over your own.

The third tract that I beseech you by all means to possess is, *a hatred of sin*. This will prove a better defence to you than plates of brass. You will be better armed by possessing this spirit, than by putting on a coat of mail. On land, or on water, at home and abroad, by day and by night, in your going out and your coming in, always have this tract with you. With God’s blessing, it will keep your heart from evil, your eyes from tears, and your feet from falling.

Men often arm themselves with pistols to defend themselves from robbers ; why, where one robber attacks us, we are beset with a thousand sins. The robber takes our money, but sin takes away our peace ; the robber may kill the body, but sin destroys the soul ! Yes, yes ! it is a clear

case that you cannot, at all, get on in your Christian course without this tract. It is a good sign when the conscience is tender, and shrinks from evil as the sensitive plant does from the touch. With all your care and watching, the heart will deceive you, “for it is deceitful above all things;” but if you have not a hatred of sin, have a care lest you wallow in iniquity as a sow wallows in the mire.

The fourth tract that I wish you to possess, for it is indeed a treasure, is *love to the Saviour*. If you have it not, God of his great mercy grant that it may be soon given you, for it will strengthen your hands and your heart, and move you to do more for your fellow sinners, in helping them on their way to heaven, than any thing else in the world.

Without this tract you may almost as well read the Talmud of the Jew, the Koran of the Mohammedan, or the Shaster of the Hindoo, as the Christian Bible. Seek for it, and value it as the greatest treasure. It will stimulate you to great enterprises, reconcile you to great afflictions, support you in great trials, and afford you great consolation.

The fifth tract that I would press on your attention is, *a confidence in God's promises*. Get this, and keep it, and you may “rejoice all day, and

sing in the night." I need not stop to tell you the good things God has promised to his people, for there is no good thing which he has not promised to them.

Do you think that if we really believed the eternal promises of God, which are yea and amen in Jesus Christ, that we should ever be cast down? No! it is because we believe them not, that we are dispirited. We have gleams of sunshine, seasons in which we rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation; but we are such poor, wavering, doubting, unbelieving sinners, that we soon begin to falter in our faith, to dishonour God, and to deprive ourselves of peace.

If we really believed that our heavenly Father would be to us a Sun and Shield, that in six troubles he would deliver us, and in seven let no evil come nigh us; that he would guide us by his counsel, and bring us to glory; if we had no doubt about the matter, but were fully assured in our minds, that "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies;" then should we "rejoice alway," and again be ready to rejoice.

The sixth and last tract that I urge you to carry with you wherever you go, is that of *a Christian life*. You may judge of the value and importance of this tract, when I tell you that it

embodies the substance of all the rest. It has in it the marrow of them all, the very essence of every thing good and desirable.

I must honestly own that this is a very rare tract, and a perfect copy is not to be obtained. Many people in the world undervalue it, but try you to get it, and when you have it, value it far above the poor perishable bits and drops that sustain your mortal tabernacle. Compared with it silver and gold are as dross, neither can rubies fairly be brought forward in comparison with it.

And now, perhaps you are ready to ask me, if I carry these tracts continually with me? Oh that I did! Oh that they clung to me closely as my garments, and were a part of my very being!

But, remember, you are not to screen yourselves behind my infirmities. If I am not so kind-hearted as I ought to be: if at times anger flushes my cheek, instead of forbearance and love filling my heart, it is to my reproach, but not to your justification. However numberless my transgressions, and faint my love to the Saviour—if my faith be feeble, and my life be blotted and blurred with a thousand, ay, ten thousand blemishes, these things will neither excuse your deficiencies, nor save you from the consequences of error.

Again I say, and I say it with fervency and

affection, get these tracts, if you have them not. Ask them of God, who gives liberally Christian gifts and Christian graces to his people ; and read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them ; for they will be an ensample and encouragement to others, a lamp to your own feet, and a blessing to your souls.

In conclusion, bear in mind that what is necessary to be done, is necessary also to be done directly. The pyramids may possibly endure a few more flying centuries, and after they are moulderling in the dust, the “everlasting hills” may be lifting their giant heads to the skies ; but you and I are but creatures of a day, and the sun of to-morrow we may not see. Onward, then, for heaven ! seeking humbly and ardently, as we pursue our pilgrimage, the good of man and the glory of the Redeemer.

THE END

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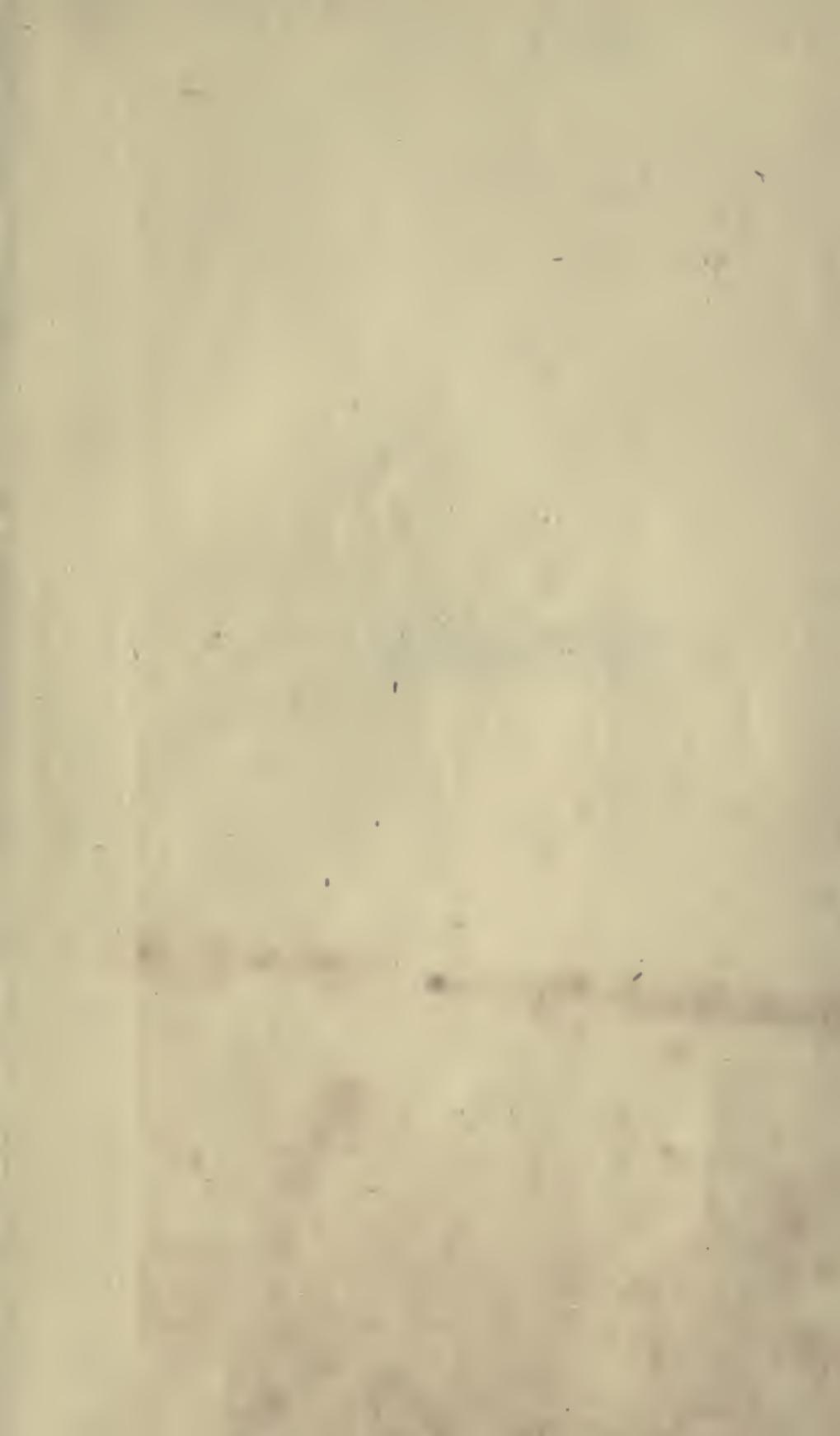
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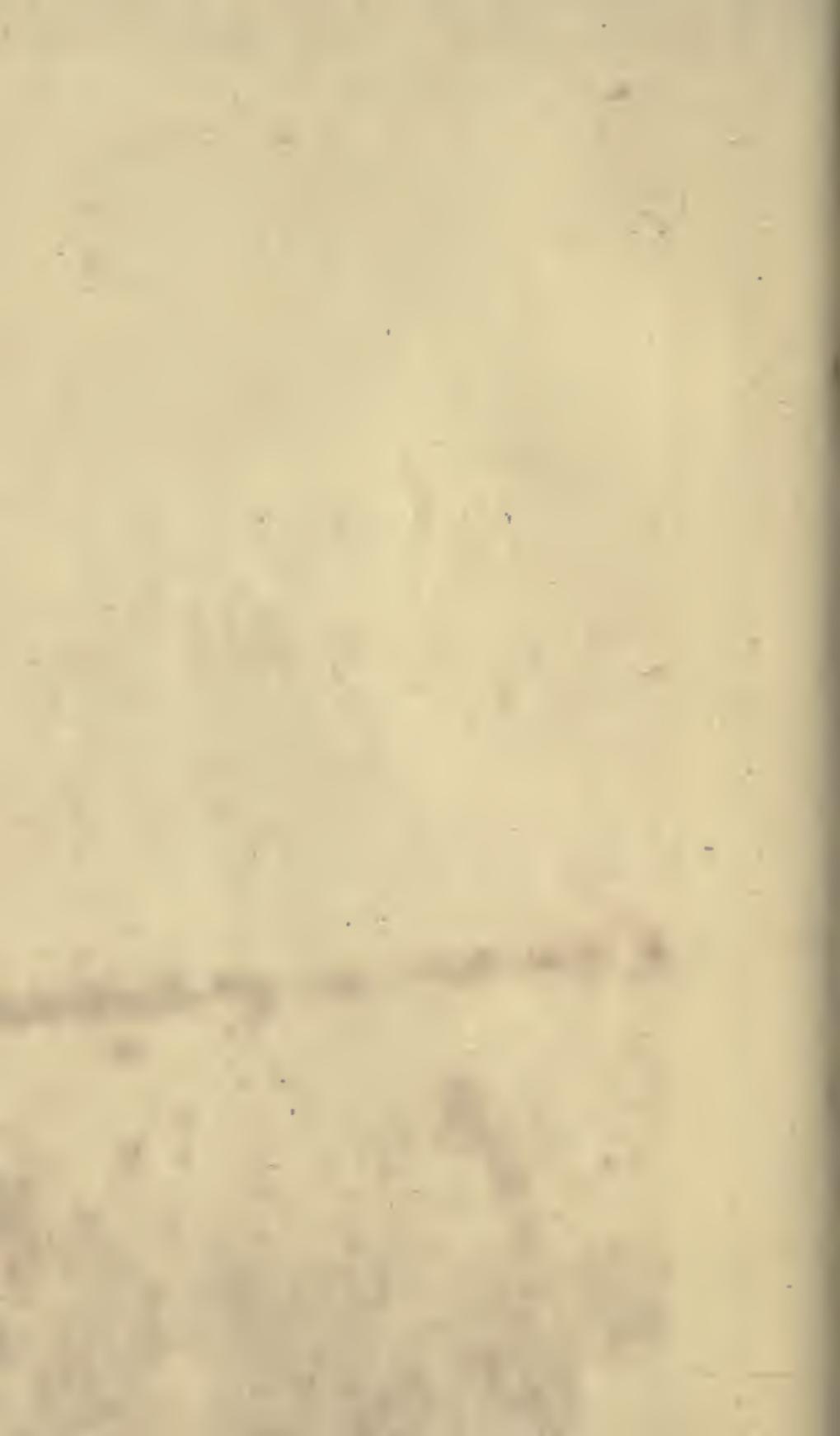
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